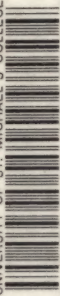
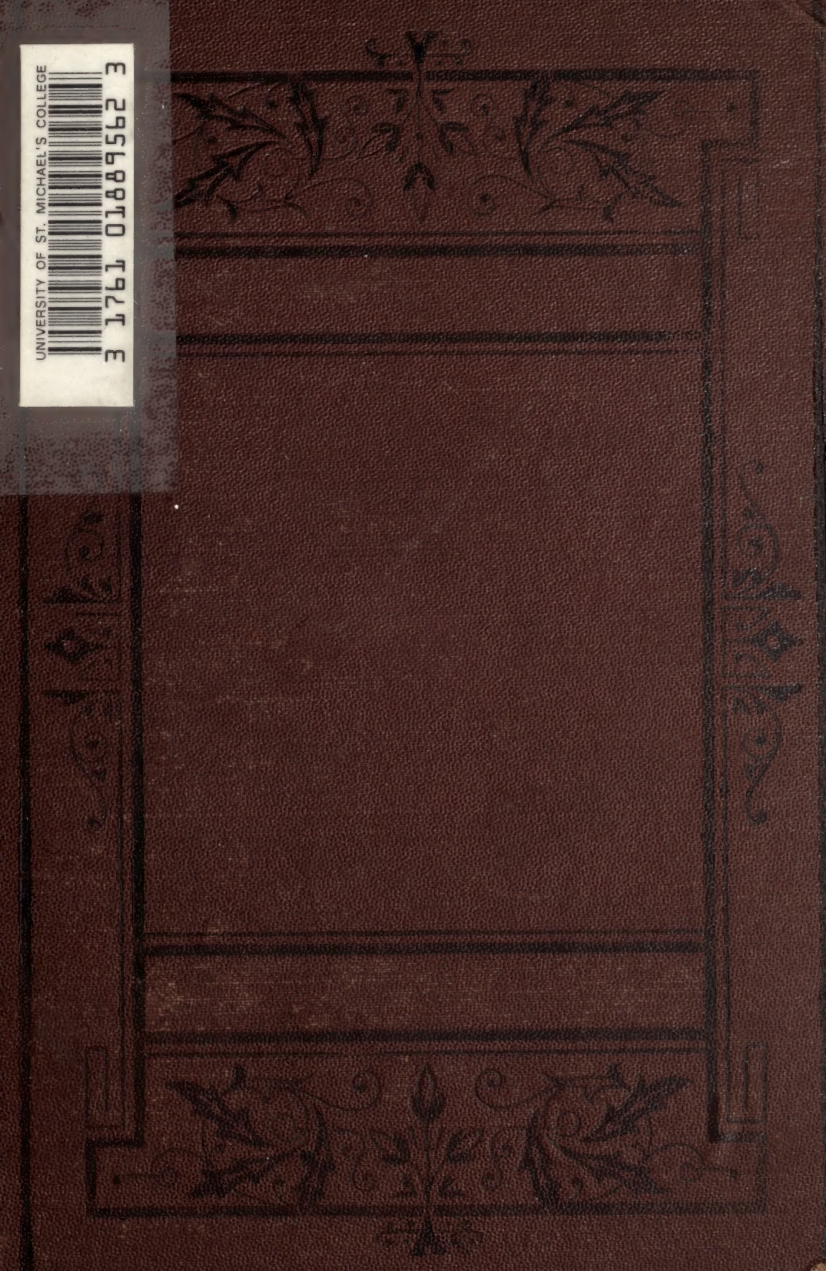


UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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M. B. C. 184 Arris.

SERMONS, LECTURES,

ETC. ETC.,

OF

THE REV. MICHAEL B. BUCKLEY,

(LATE) SS. PETER AND PAUL, CORK.

WITH A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE,

BY THE

REV. CHARLES DAVIS,

SKIBBEREEN, DIOCESE OF ROSS.

BOSTON:

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TO THE
MOST REV. WILLIAM DELANY, D. D.,
Bishop of Cork.

MY LORD,

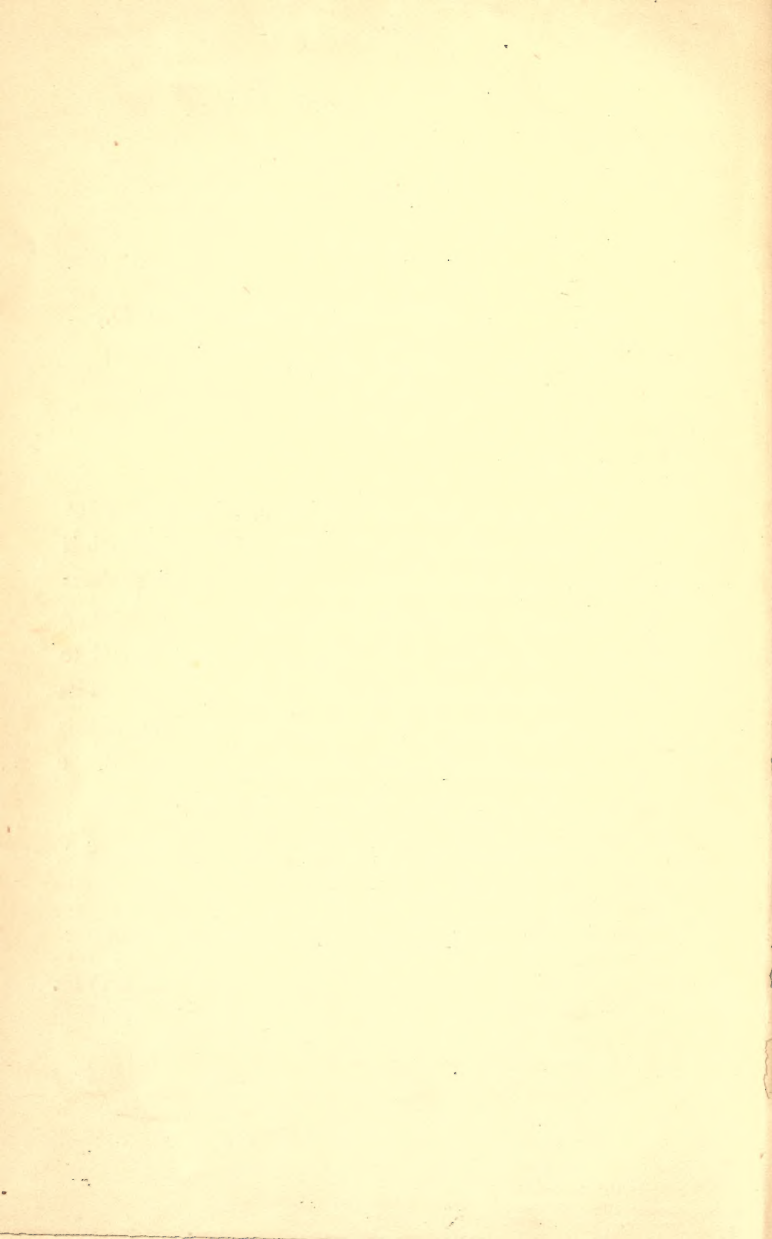
WITH your gracious permission, I beg to inscribe your honored name on the first page of a work which is devoted to the labours of one of your Lordship's subjects who, at home and abroad, exercised his varied and brilliant talents to extend the holy influence of Religion, and to erect in your ancient city a Cathedral worthy of the Saints who inaugurated, and the venerated Bishops who, to this day, have made the diocese of Cork synonymous with the undying faith of a noble and Christian people.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient Servant,

C. DAVIS.



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INTRODUCTION.

A FEW explanatory remarks, by way of introduction, will suffice. This volume does not profess to reproduce all the Sermons and Lectures of the Rev. Author. His years of labour were comparatively few, and his demise entirely unexpected. Hence many of his literary efforts are incomplete, and those that are complete remain without that superior revision which his pen could alone bestow.

The Sermons were for the most part preached in Cork; of those which attracted such attention in America no record remains. The collocation with regard to the subject-matter may have been better arranged, had all the Sermons been collected before giving to the press. The Lectures have been published just as delivered, with a few trivial omissions. The few pieces of Poetry at the end of the volume came into the writer's hands rather by accident than by any diligent research. Indeed, most of his fugitive pieces were contributed anonymously to the press and periodicals of the day, and very few can be now identified. Hence, those that

are now given may not afford a correct standard of FATHER BUCKLEY'S merit in that department.

Under these peculiar circumstances this volume is presented to the public, with the well-grounded hope that it may prove attractive and useful, and serve to preserve the Author's memory amongst his fellow-countrymen in either Hemisphere.

MEMOIR.

A PART from the exercise of literary ability and the display of sacred eloquence in the pulpit, the life of a Missionary Priest contains little which could excite the interest of the reading public. His days are, for the most part, occupied in a succession of sacred duties, ministering at the Altar, recitation of the Divine Office, attendance in the Confessional, visiting the sick, instruction of youth—arduous duties, for the due performance of which he seeks no reward at the hands of men, but rather in the sight of Him whose minister he is constituted. It is scarcely necessary, therefore, to describe at any length the zealous and exemplary manner in which the subject of this brief memoir discharged those duties which are always deemed paramount in the clerical profession.

The Rev. Michael Bernard Buckley was born in the city of Cork on the 9th of March, 1831. His parents occupied an humble station in life, and were much respected for thorough piety and integrity. From his childhood, Michael was destined for the priesthood, and was given the name of Bernard, that great saint of modern times, who cast so brilliant a lustre on the Church of God. In furtherance of this pious resolution of his parents, his innocent youth was guarded with the most assiduous care. Whilst yet almost

a child, he ministered at the altar of the South parish (St. Finbar's), which then resounded with the chaste eloquence of Archdeacon Keeffe, one of the first pulpit orators of this or any other country. At the early age of twelve he was sent to a classical school, conducted by a Mr. Hartnett, and there made his first acquaintance with the rudiments of the ancient languages. After a few years he was transferred to the "Mansion House" School, as it was then called.

This Seminary, soon after its institution, became one of the most flourishing in the south of Ireland. It owed its origin to the zeal of a pious priest, whose learning and virtues are still held in hallowed recollection by his fellow-citizens and his brethren in the ministry—the Very Rev. Michael O'Sullivan. The Mansion House, then one of the most imposing edifices in the city, had been for centuries the residence of successive mayors, and, doubtless, under the old *regime* had been the scene of many a loyal Corporation orgie. When the Municipal Corporation Act took effect, it was deserted by the mayors, and the interest in it leased to Father O'Sullivan for a moderate sum. He converted it at once into a large and comprehensive educational establishment, which soon acquired a well-merited celebrity. It was conducted by the most approved classical and mathematical teachers, and students flocked to it from all parts of Munster. The building has been since devoted to still more exalted purposes, being the abode of the sick and infirm, under the compassionate care of the Sisters of Mercy.

Here the innate genius of Father Buckley began to develop itself. Assiduous in his studies, he soon achieved a high place in classical and scientific attainments. There, also, he acquired a decided taste for high English Literature—a taste which strengthened with years, and found its

appropriate results in the beautiful compositions which are now submitted to the reader. In connexion with the seminary was a society, composed of ecclesiastical students, called the "Sodality of the Immaculate Conception." Not a few of my clerical readers will recall it to memory with that pleasure which ever lingers about the happy reminiscences of the past. This Sodality was instituted for a two-fold purpose—advancement in piety and secular knowledge. In order to promote the latter, a Debating Society was established. Essays on various subjects were read and discussed with much animation; and thus was laid the foundation of those elocutionary powers which in after life distinguished many members of the Sodality. Father Buckley was for several years an active and prominent member; and no one, more successfully than he, profited by the spirit of industry and emulation which these literary exercises fostered.

In the year 1849, he entered the College of Maynooth—being the successful aspirant amongst forty-seven competitors. His extensive classical acquirements obtained for him admission into the Logic Class. Throughout his College course he won prizes in all his classes. He devoted his vacant time to the study of the English Classics in prose and verse—not reading them cursorily, for the amusement of the hour, but treating them as text-books and models of composition. He soon acquired a taste for poetry, and contributed several fugitive pieces to "Duffy's Fireside Magazine," a periodical then very popular in the College. He never allowed his knowledge of the ancient Classics to pass into oblivion, and loved to spend an hour in the library, renewing his acquaintance with them. During his time in college, and afterwards on the Mission, he occasionally published beautiful translations of Moore's Melodies, and other popular songs, into Latin verse. No

attempt has been made to collect these scattered members. A few have fallen into my hands, which, with other miscellaneous pieces, will be found at the end of the volume. Father Buckley also became a proficient in several modern languages, particularly the German. Several translations by him of German poetry have been published, and have been much admired, not alone for the faithful rendering of the original, but for the exact reproduction of the German metre.

It is a strange fact that he possessed an excellent singing voice and a correct ear for music, without his being aware of it. This is not very unusual in this country, where, until very lately, so few opportunities existed of developing the voice and taste of the people. Father Buckley had not even attempted to sing before he entered Maynooth. In a short time the late gifted President, Dr. Renchan, detected the latent faculty, and the pleasing gift of song, grave and gay, proved in after life not to be the least of his accomplishments. It was the custom in Maynooth, as in other ecclesiastical Colleges, to exercise the students in the art and practice of preaching. The divinity students, at certain periods of the year, were obliged to deliver sermons of their own composition before a large assembly of their fellow-students, presided over by one or more of the superiors of the College. On these occasions Father Buckley's efforts elicited the liveliest admiration. The writer of this sketch was present when one of the most learned and critical judges in the house paid him the most flattering eulogium, and expressed his opinion that the sermon just delivered was a model one in every respect, in matter and manner.

The halcyon days of College life came to a close. Father Buckley quitted Maynooth in June, 1855, and was soon after ordained priest in the Church of Ovens, by the pre-

sent venerated bishop of the diocese, Dr. Delany. After a few months in the curacy of Ballinhassig, he was transferred to Kinsale. The first years of missionary life contribute much to determine the future character of the young priest. Free from parental control and college discipline, he suddenly finds himself independent, exercising large influence and authority, in a most extended sphere. Hence early associations arise, which give a direction to his tastes, and which generally subsist to the close of life. In this respect society in Kinsale was all that could be desired. In its church Father Buckley had ample opportunities of maturing and exercising his talents as a preacher. The exquisite scenery which surrounds the old town by land and water filled his mind with beautiful imagery, whilst its historical reminiscences awakened in him a love of country, which was only extinguished in death. His next missions were the parishes of Drumoleague and Enniskean. Here his facility of acquiring languages was of great advantage; for, after a short time, he became a tolerable proficient in the Irish—perhaps of all languages the most useful to a missionary priest in the wilds of Carbery. Father Buckley was always most observant of the habits and customs of the peasantry, and in that familiar intercourse with them, which is the happy privilege of the Irish priest, he hoarded up a fund of pleasant anecdote and native witticism, which often convulsed with laughter many a social circle.

At length Father Buckley's dearest wish was gratified, in being transferred to Cork. He longed to labour amidst the scenes of his youth, surrounded by beloved friends in his native city. He loved to mingle with those who have made the name of Cork illustrious in the domain of letters. Here was every inducement to cultivate these intellectual gifts with which Providence had endowed him. The time

set apart for clerical duties is more exactly appointed in a city than in a rural parish. Hence a considerable portion of each day may be devoted to study by a zealous priest. Moreover, public libraries and other facilities of reference abound in cities, and are easy of access. All these aids, combined with a desire for knowledge, which more or less influences every member of the clerical profession, left no consideration wanting to stimulate him in the path of progress. Nor was a noble emulation in the past and present absent.

Cork, from the earliest period, was renowned for its love of letters. Its origin and nucleus was a Bishop's See and a celebrated University. The sainted founder of the diocese, Finbar, having left his sequestered cloister in "Lone Gougane Barra," with that rare appreciation of natural scenery so characteristic of the monks of the West, fixed his See at the confluence of the Lee with the ocean tide. On this foundation sprung up a City abounding in religious edifices and educational institutions. In succeeding ages her sons acquired celebrity in the arts and sciences. It is unnecessary and beside the purpose of the writer to designate the many individuals in every profession who have added a garland to the fair fame of the "Beautiful Citie." In sculpture and painting, oratory and verse, those peaceful pursuits which shed a halo on the city or country of their successful votaries, Cork has risen to high distinction and renown. Her sons and daughters have competed in other lands for the prizes of genius, and have won them.

Nor was the science of the Saints neglected. The long line of distinguished ecclesiastics, illustrious in virtue and learning, who grace the annals of the diocese, from the sainted scholar of Bangor (Finbar) to the present accomplished Prelate, who, in his own person, revives all the

glories of the past, bears ample testimony to the high order of excellence attained by the clergy of Cork.

The education of youth has been admirably provided for. Any one who reads the first Sermons in this volume cannot fail to perceive the admirable system of instruction pursued by the religious of either sex, whose schools contain the humbler children of the entire population. St. Vincent's Seminary has ever since its foundation imparted a classical and commercial education of the most approved order, whilst the Queen's College, if only adapted to the just requirements of Catholicism, would prove an inestimable boon. The finished scholar has ample opportunity of improving and developing his talents in debates connected with the Literary and Scientific Society, whilst the youth of humbler fortunes and aspirations possess all that could be desired in the "Young Men's Society." There is no branch of useful knowledge which is not sedulously cultivated in this flourishing Society. It is beyond comparison the most successful institution of its kind in the kingdom, numbering over 700 members, and presided over by one who is himself a scholar of rare attainments, J. G. M'Carthy.

In such a state of things, Father Buckley entered on his missionary career in Cork. He had come from the country, elated in spirits and vigorous in health. Amidst the facilities which surrounded him on all sides, he determined on leaving nothing undone to improve his mind. The early part of each day, after his professional duties were discharged, he devoted to study. He read closely and constantly the Sacred Scriptures, the Homilies of the Fathers, and other spiritual works of the most eminent writers. He based his style on the best models of English composition. He studied principally with pen in hand, writing out constantly, and comparing the expression of his own thoughts with that of standard authors. He was

gifted with an imagination lively and active, indeed poetical, and this imparted an ease and grace to his diction which seemed to flow from his pen without effort. The fruits of this labour and study were soon apparent. It was his lot to officiate in the South parish, and to address the congregation from a pulpit which had been long adorned by the eloquence of the most brilliant and effective preachers of the diocese. To them Father Buckley proved no unworthy successor. His fame soon spread abroad, and crowds flocked to hear him. His personal appearance was imposing. Tall of stature, and of graceful figure, he always assumed an erect and dignified posture in the pulpit. His voice was peculiarly clear and sonorous, his gesture animated and appropriate. In a few years his character as a preacher was established. He passed from pulpit to pulpit, until he has traversed the various churches of the city. He preached for every public charity, and did so with a readiness and disinterestedness beyond all praise. Indeed he was the most unselfish of men in his labours, being never known to refuse a request to advocate the cause of religion or charity, no matter how distant the place, or inconvenient the time.

In the mean time, Father Buckley did not neglect his other literary pursuits. He was a prominent member of the Cork Library—a time-honored institution—and was also connected with all the literary societies in the city. He presided over one of the guilds of the Young Men's Society, and delivered several lectures before them with the most marked success. He also evinced an active interest in the success of the "Literary and Scientific Society," of which he was a distinguished member.

In the year 1868, Father Buckley was prompted to attempt a more ambitious project—the publication of some literary work. He selected for his theme the Life and Writings of

the Rev. Arthur O'Leary, a well-known Capuchin Friar, who flourished at the close of the last century. Father O'Leary was a man of wonderful genius and ability. His versatile learning and polished wit, combined with high social qualities, obtained for him admission into the highest society in the realm. His life was an erratic and eccentric one. Such a subject, at a first glance, seemed to be well adapted to Father Buckley's talents and taste, but it had its serious drawbacks. O'Leary left behind no work of any special importance to posterity. His writings were ephemeral, chiefly polemical pamphlets, arising out of the peculiar circumstances of the time. Through an over-indulgent desire to disarm prejudice and conciliate his opponents, he used expressions and advanced opinions which cannot abide the test of orthodox scrutiny. His wit, eminently brilliant and sarcastic, has lost with time much of its piquancy. Indeed, wit and humour, elicited extempore at the social gathering, and on peculiar occasions, prove sadly deficient in point when transferred to the cold page of a book. Furthermore, his patriotism was vehemently suspected. In the days of the contemplated Union, when the independence of his country was menaced by the extinction of her legislature, it would not be a congenial act in an English Government to reward a sterling patriot with an annual pension of £200. Notwithstanding these obstacles in his way, Father Buckley produced an admirable book. It had a large circulation, and received favourable notice at the hands of the reviewers. Had Providence vouchsafed him length of days, the "Life and Writings of the Rev. Arthur O'Leary" would have been only a prelude to other works of a more enduring character.

In the same year Father Buckley was removed to St. Peter and Paul's, a new and beautiful church in the centre

of the city. Thither his eloquence attracted immense crowds. Thus, in an incredibly short space of time, he had raised himself, by force of genius, to a most exalted position—that of being universally recognised as a preacher of the very highest rank, and his progress in improvement year after year unmistakably foreshadowed a still more brilliant career in the future. Though an ardent Patriot, he always kept aloof from political strife. His genial disposition estranged him from public contention. Indeed, he was most tolerant of the errors of others. Hence, in all his sermons and lectures we do not perceive the slightest tinge of bigotry, and we look in vain for any expression which could cause pain to those who differed from him in religious belief.

In the cause of Temperance he was an enthusiastic champion, pleading its claims in public and private, when occasion offered, as became one who, in his youth, ministered at the altar to its illustrious Apostle. Though young in years and missionary services, he identified himself with every movement which served to elevate the social and intellectual status of his fellow-citizens.

In private life he was a welcome guest at every social circle. A well-read and accomplished scholar, he spoke fluently and gracefully on the ordinary topics of the day. His sallies of wit, varied and frequent, were lively and to the point—not the wit which needlessly offends, but which adds an enduring charm to social conversation. Hence, it is not to be wondered at that his society was constantly courted by an ever-widening circle of admiring friends.

The time had now come when Father Buckley's services to religion were to be transferred to another sphere. The want of a Cathedral, worthy of the diocese, and of the progress of religion in Cork, had been long felt. The Church, dignified by that name, was an old and

rather uncouth building; and, although its interior was decorated with becoming splendour, it did not seem to keep pace with the pious ardour and growing architectural taste of the Catholics of Cork. Within a few years several beautiful Churches and Convents had sprung up as if by magic; yet the attention of all was directed to the erection of a magnificent Cathedral, suitable to the wants and greatness of the second City in the kingdom. Under the zealous auspices of the venerated Bishop, a diocesan collection was inaugurated, and the various parishes responded to the call with a holy emulation. Large sums were realized, and the City, ever foremost in works of charity and religion, contributed its thousands of pounds. In order to render the project a complete success, it was determined to solicit assistance beyond the seas.

Of all people on the surface of the globe, the exiled Irish preserve most vividly the memory of their abandoned homes. No matter how changed his condition—how prosperous his fortunes, the Irishman in strange lands yearns after the green island of his affections—the home of his kindred. Hence the indissoluble tie that binds the sons of the Emerald Isle in America and the old Land. Hence the generous desire evinced by Irishmen, and the descendants of Irishmen, in the Western Hemisphere to contribute to the erection in their native land of those temples of worship which, in a measure, embody the glorious traditions of the past. To awaken this sympathy on behalf of the Cork Cathedral, two Clergymen were appointed to visit America—one of whom was Father Buckley. On the 22nd May, 1870, he embarked at Queens-town, accompanied to the steam-ship by a host of friends, and fervently praying for a favourable voyage and a happy

return. He reached New York on the 3rd of June, and immediately set about the work of his mission. There are many difficulties, physical and moral, to be encountered by an Irish priest in quest of funds in America. The extremes of climate, and the rapid transition from heat to cold, prove very trying to a European constitution. The discomfort and fatigue arising from constant travelling, and bodily labour, are wearying and excessive. He must be endowed also with most exemplary patience, for he will often be received with indifference, or, perhaps, a cold refusal.

In every new country, as the United States of America, the Catholic faith has advanced with giant strides. With the increasing number of worshippers, increased accommodation was required; and from the mere requirements of additional accommodation arose the desire of emulating the faith of the Old World in erecting magnificent temples to the worship of God. Hence, in every diocese splendid Cathedrals have been raised, or are in course of erection. New churches, convents, and schools, built in a style of magnificence commensurate with the enlarged views of the American people, have well-nigh taxed the generosity of Roman Catholics to the utmost point. Most probably, in view of these circumstances, the Bishops of America, some years ago, came to the resolution of not permitting foreign ecclesiastics to make public appeals for funds in their churches. Hence, arises a formidable difficulty in the path of the Irish missionary collector. It is true that the bishops individually subscribe and give approval to the project, but the missionary must solicit from house to house, or depend upon the proceeds of lectures.

Lecturing in the United States has long since become

a national institution. People engaged in commercial pursuits, and the active acquisition of wealth, prefer to acquire information, or enjoy intellectual pleasure, in a popular form. Hence the Lecture-hall is generally resorted to; and so astonishing have been the pecuniary results, that every writer of note in the Old World has, at one time or another, crossed the Atlantic to reap golden harvests in the Land of the West. For these displays the genius and character of Father Buckley were eminently adapted. His subjects were generally connected with the past history of his country—a theme which, when eloquently treated, never fails to charm an Irish-American audience. From his first appearance on the platform his career was a brilliant success. He delivered lectures in the principal cities of Canada, in Boston, and New York. On one occasion, in the Cooper Institute, 5000 persons were computed to be present. He preached in many churches for local charities, and if he could have made the object of his mission the subject of his sermons, the pecuniary results would have been enormous. As it was, they far surpassed any hitherto realized by any ecclesiastic within the same time.

Father Buckley wrote a Diary of his labours and travels in America. It is difficult to conceive how he could accomplish all the work recorded in it, and still more difficult to realize how he could have found time to write it. Yet he allowed no day to pass by, even when confined to his bed by a painful illness, without devoting some time in describing the events which were taking place around him.

This Diary is written throughout with great ability, and in his happiest style. It was in contemplation to append it to this volume; and, doubtless, it would prove most

interesting, especially to his transatlantic admirers; but the matters it treats of were deemed too recent, and might give rise to misunderstanding, without an opportunity of explanation.

Before his departure for America, Father Buckley had been visited by several attacks of bronchitis. It caused him, however, no serious alarm. It was thought that change of scene and air would only serve to improve a constitution naturally hale and robust. It had the contrary effect. The sudden change of climate, combined with incessant labour of body and mind, deeply impaired his health. He had to succumb several times to attacks of rheumatism, accompanied by bronchial affection of an acute nature. Although confined to his room for weeks, he displayed his usual activity in reading and preparing lectures, which he was never destined to deliver. He was most anxious to visit California in furtherance of his mission; but his physicians imperatively commanded him to return to Ireland. It was then too late. With a broken frame and shattered constitution he prepared to return. His numerous friends and admirers in New York were deeply affected at his departure, or rather at the melancholy cause of it. They resolved at once to manifest their recognition of his worth. A meeting was convened, and a large sum of money was immediately forthcoming. A testimonial, in the shape of a magnificent gold watch and chain, with a suitable address, was presented to him. The address is inserted here, as a testimony of the consideration he was held in, as well as because it was shared in by a large number of ecclesiastics—a compliment rather unusual in such circumstances:—

" To the Rev. M. B. Buckley.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

" We, the undersigned, a part of a large circle of your New York friends, lay and clerical, having heard with regret that ill health obliges you to return prematurely to your native land, cannot permit you to depart without some token of our admiration, esteem, and affection.

" During your sojourn amongst us in the discharge of a noble and arduous mission, we had constant occasion to admire the remarkable combination of qualities, intellectual and social, which you brought to the achievement of your task. We have listened with a throb of natural pride, as well as religious emotion, to your wonderful eloquence in the pulpit. We have sat enchanted in the lecture-room when you discoursed on topics less sublime, but in language no less elegant and moving ; in the social circle we have been charmed with the graces of your conversation, in which, whether the subject was grave or gay, you displayed a cultivated taste, a profound scholarship, a rare wit and humour, and, above all, a gentlemanly bearing, and an outpouring of genial feeling, which, while they enkindled delight, begot that genuine admiration with which the Irish Catholic loves to regard the Irish priest.

" Sir, while you were in our midst, we felt that you did honour to our common country and to the glorious Apostleship of which you are a member, not only by talents and accomplishments, but by the noble virtues which it is beyond the province of nature to engender ; and amongst those who pay you this tribute of affection are a large number of the clergy of this great city, who are proud to recognise in your character a type of all that is excellent and worthy of emulation in their order.

“We part with you in pain, with which, however, is not unmingled the hope of meeting you again—may it be once more beneath the “Stars and Stripes.” If not, in the dear old land with which our hearts’ tenderest affections are entwined.

“We shall fervently pray for your safe passage across the wide Atlantic, and we beg of you to accept the accompanying gift as a very trifling memorial of these feelings towards you, which we have in these few words so inadequately expressed.

“We have the honour to be, Sir,

“YOUR FAITHFUL FRIENDS.”

Reply.

“MY DEAR FRIENDS,

“If there be any feeling which more than others excite the human heart, and impede the utterance of gratitude, they are the emotions of surprise, joy, and pride. And such are the feelings which your beautiful address and magnificent testimonial have awakened in me. Surprise, because I dared not expect so flattering a compliment; joy, because I have been deemed worthy of it; and pride, because I shall be able to bear henceforth on my person a constant reminder of the favour with which you regard me.

“How delightful is it to me to find in the precious donors of this tribute that happy blending of priests and people, which constitutes the surest basis, and culminates in the brightest glory of society and religion.

“While travelling through this great country, I have been charmed and edified by the zeal, the talents, the unblemished character and dignified demeanour of the clergy. Is it not, then, a just source of pride for me to think that

the clergy of New York, who rank among the foremost in America, should join in paying me this splendid tribute of affection and esteem?

“To my lay friends, who are here present or represented, no expression of thanks is necessary, they know me too well to doubt the sincerity and intensity of my gratitude. My joy on this occasion, like every other agreeable feeling of humanity, is alloyed with pain, caused by the reflection that I am about to be sundered, perhaps for ever, from the society of so many who have made me the recipient of their hospitality and friendship.

“It is to me a source of deep regret that ill-health should debar me from extending my tour through this vast Continent, for I was anxious to make myself still further acquainted with a land where nature has spread her treasures in such profusion, and where man enjoys, more than in any region of the world, the blessing of that liberty without which life itself is valueless.

“My friends, this noble vessel bears me to the land of my birth; but to the latest day of my existence I shall cherish a grateful recollection of the kindness I have received in the Western World, and, above all, in the Empire city of America.

“Your sincere friend,

“M. B. BUCKLEY.”

This reply was given on board the steam-ship, which immediately started amid the plaudits and adieus of Father Buckley's numerous friends. Of the many testimonials of which he was the happy recipient, this was the most flattering and acceptable of all. The joyous anticipation of soon reaching home and friends triumphed over the debility of his body, and during the voyage, which was fair and prosperous, he mingled freely and gaily with his

fellow-passengers. He was foremost in promoting the evening concert, the innocent game, the social reunion, the newly-formed friendship—these pleasant pastimes on the deep, which leave behind them such happy memories. On the 20th of October, 1871, the “Java” reached Queens-town, and Father Buckley found himself surrounded by a large concourse of friends. A glance at his wasted features made painfully apparent the ravages a few months had made in his health. After the excitement of many greetings, he retired to a cottage at Sunday’s Well, where, looking down on the placid waters of his native Lee, he sought to recruit his shattered constitution. Through the genial influence of his native air, and the constant attention of beloved friends, he seemed to recover his wonted health. Above all, the fervid hope of mature manhood buoyed him up. The leading Catholics of Cork determined to give him a formal welcome. It took the usual form of an address, which, with a purse of gold, was presented to him by the Mayor and several influential citizens. It is given here as being the last written tribute of his fellow-citizens to his worth, as his reply contains the last words he ever uttered in public.

“ To the Rev. M. B. Buckley.

“DEAR FATHER BUCKLEY,

“We heartily welcome your return to Cork from the arduous mission which, at the request of our revered Bishop, and for the advancement of our Cathedral Church, you generously undertook. The labours and results of that mission have given you a new title to our regard. We ought never look on our Cathedral without remembering that portion of its splendour is due to you and those who, in the distant land, thought of the wants and claims of the country of their birth.

“ We trust that you will soon be able to resume the duties in our city which this mission and the fatigues of its labours have interrupted. We hope soon to hear again the voice which so often called us to charity, and stirred us to devotion, with an eloquence that revived the best traditions of the Cork pulpit. We hope you will resume those literary labours which won commendation from the highest critical tribunal. And we pray that for many a year may be spared to us the wit that brightened our social hours, and the zealous priestly ministrations to which the inhabitants of this city owe so much.

“ Signed on behalf of the Subscribers,

“ JOHN DALY, *Mayor.*

“ JOHN G. MACCARTHY, } *Secretaries.*
“ STEPHEN PERRY, }

Reply.

“ MY DEAR FRIENDS,

“ Next to the rapture I felt on that delightful morning, when, on my return voyage from America, I again beheld the rugged coast and eternal hills of my native land, is the joy now enkindled in my heart by those ‘sweet voices’ of my fellow-citizens welcoming me home.

“ In compliance with the request of our venerated Bishop, I undertook the arduous mission to which you allude. It is, perhaps, to be regretted that ill health prevented me from attaining in the pursuit of it the full crown of success to which I aspired. But I did not desist until nature succumbed; and it is now my pride to reflect that my labours, however incomplete, have met with the warmest gratitude of my superior, and won for me this double tribute of eulogy and reward at your hands.

“ Amongst the many yearnings of my ambition, not the

least ardent has ever been the desire to reflect, if possible, some additional lustre on the city of my birth and my affections—a city already hallowed by the records and traditions of so many of the great and good; and I am therefore specially pleased by your assurance that my humble share in the erection of your Cathedral—the noblest artistic treasure of a Christian people—will not be soon forgotten.

“For your sympathy with me in my present infirm condition, I am deeply grateful; but with you I trust that the period is not far distant when, under a benign Providence, I shall be restored to that sphere of usefulness which is the end of my profession, and wherein I may resume my labours for the promotion of religion in the midst of a people whom I love, and whom it is my pride and honour to serve.

“M. B. BUCKLEY.”

It is sad to think that hopes so bright should be blighted, and such brilliant promises prematurely extinguished. Such, however, was the will of Providence. After a few weeks he took up his residence in the Presbytery of SS. Peter and Paul with the view of resuming his missionary duties. Unable to accomplish this, he proposed to retire for some time to the house of his sister. Here his malady returned with increased violence, and dangerous symptoms manifested themselves. The best medical aid was provided, and the tenderest care lavished on him. It was in vain. The announcement of his approaching end was made to him, and he received the sad message with the faith and fortitude of a Christian priest. For several months he was unable to recline, and remained sitting day and night in an arm chair. The devoted attention of many friends, lay and clerical, mitigated somewhat the anguish

of his body, whilst he was comforted in his soul by frequent exercises of piety, and the ministration of a holy and venerable priest, Very Rev. Dr. Russell, O. P. After a long and tedious struggle, he breathed his last on the 17th May, 1872, in the 40th year of his age, and 17th of his missionary career.

His death, so early and unexpected, cast a gloom over the entire city. His obsequies manifested the high esteem in which he was held by all classes of the community, and the universal sorrow felt at his loss. On the morning of the funeral, the Church of SS. Peter and Paul, in which the body lay, was crowded in every part, just as when, often before, they pressed to hear the words of sacred eloquence from his lips. During the plaintive office of the dead, many a tear was shed, and many the outburst of passionate grief for the young priest, who was now no more. Rarely, if ever, did such a funeral procession wend its way through the city of Cork. Many thousands thronged the streets and highway leading to the Botanic Gardens. Every class, creed, and profession were numerously represented—from the chief magistrate of the city to the beggar who was the recipient of his charity. Amidst the solemn chaunt of the church and the silent sorrow of the people, his corpse was deposited in that beautiful cemetery, doubly hallowed, as it is, by religious consecration and the mingling of its earth with the remains of the purest and holiest. Father Buckley's grave did not remain long unhonoured. A few yards from the entrance to the cemetery a beautiful Celtic cross of noble proportions and exquisite workmanship, points out his last resting place. On its pedestal is engraved the following epitaph:—

MEMOIR.

"This Celtic Cross
 has been erected by his fellow Citizens,
 Lay and Clerical,
 over the remains, and in Memory of
 Rev. Michael Bernard Buckley,
 SS. Peter and Paul's, Cork,
 in testimony of
 His Sacred Eloquence in the Cause of
 Religion, Education, Charity;
 His devotion to the poor and afflicted;
 Ardent Love of Country,
 Brilliant Attainments
 in
 every department of knowledge,
 Endearing Social Qualities,
 and
 His Surpassing Worth
 as a
 Christian Priest.

Born 9th of March, A. D. 1837.

Died 17th of May, A. D. 1872.

Consummatus in brevi, explevit tempora multa—*SAP. iv.*"

The subjoined sketch of Father Buckley's character is from the eloquent pen of one who knew him well—who himself was prematurely cut off in the midst of a most glorious career, and whom his country still deeply mourns—the late John Francis Maguire.

"'FATHER BUCKLEY'—for by this title he was recognised by all his fellow-citizens—was in the very flower of his manhood, and in the full strength and brightness of his intellect; and had he been spared to reach a ripe old age, great things might have been expected of him. The promise which he gave in College was soon redeemed in his career as a missionary priest; and scarcely had he entered upon his curacy at Kinsale, where he first addressed a considerable congregation, than he began to display his

singular gifts as a preacher. From Ballinhassig he went to Kinsale, from Kinsale to Enniskean, and from thence to Drimoleague; he was then brought into the city as Chaplain to the Workhouse, and after serving for some time in the South Parish, he was removed to the Church of SS. Peter and Paul, in which he had the fullest opportunity for the development of his powers as a pulpit orator. Nor were his talents as a preacher appreciated only by his own congregation, or by Catholic people, it was a matter of ordinary occurrence for Protestants to attend when it was known, through previous announcement, that Father Buckley was to preach. And from the very nature of the man, his sermons could not be otherwise than pleasing to persons of other communions; for while they were splendid displays of pulpit eloquence, enriched by study, made solid by research, and vivified by a bright imagination and a graceful fancy, they were wholly free from controversial acerbity, and breathed the spirit of the widest charity—the true spirit of the Catholic Church. Indeed, if there were one human being from whose nature all bitterness was a stranger, that human being was Father Buckley. A nature more genial, more simple, more kindly, more child-like, and more cheerful, was rarely fashioned. In the pulpit he was at times really grand, and at all times impressive; but in his daily intercourse with his parishioners—with the people—he was simple and sympathetic—just what a priest should be.

“His fame had gone before him to America; hundreds, indeed thousands, of those who knew and loved him in every stage of his missionary career telling with pride of his pulpit triumphs, while those who looked with interest to the literary efforts of the brilliant Irish Priest had read with delight, when copied into some transatlantic journal, some of his able lectures, in which his stately elo-

quence and ripe scholarship were happily combined. Thus, when he arrived in the New World, he found himself, wherever he went, in the midst of friends and admirers—those who knew him in the old country, and those to whom his acquaintance was a pleasure newly but keenly appreciated. In the object of his mission he was most successful; and when he was bidding his friends farewell he was presented with a substantial token of the estimation in which he was held—alike as a zealous priest and accomplished gentleman. Could Father Buckley have devoted himself to literary pursuits, he would have made a high reputation as a writer. His “*Life of Father Arthur O’Leary*” was rather a waste of intellectual power than a decided success, for the interest of the subject had long died out; and though the illustrious object of his biography was admitted to be one of the most brilliant wits of the age in which he lived—and it was an age fruitful of great men—still there is scarcely any remarkable man of whom fewer particulars have come down to these days. Father Buckley possessed considerable facility for throwing off a poetical squib, in which humour and happy description abounded; and of this pleasant kind of production more than one appeared for the first time in these columns. But it was in private life that Father Buckley was in his glory. Bubbling over with fun, sparkling with wit, his company was a perpetual feast, and nothing came from his lips that was not kindly and genial. He could not hurt a human being. There was no such thing as aggression in his nature. Gall was altogether absent from his moral constitution. No wonder then that he was a favourite wherever he went, or in whatever society he happened to be thrown. The very presence of Father Buckley was enough to redeem the dullest of gatherings, and leave a pleasant memory in the minds of those who met him. Poor fellow! in his last

moments, even in the midst of pain and suffering, the old spirit did not desert him. The moment the pressure was as it were taken off, then outshone the happy nature, out flashed the kindly wit—the wit that brightened but never scorched—the wit that had no barb, and never inflicted wound. He well knew that death was coming, and he prepared to meet it as became a man and a Christian. For the last five weeks he could not lie on a bed, but day and night was propped in a chair, his life slowly and surely ebbing away. He met the supreme moment with a holy fortitude that edified those who stood sorrowing around him. ‘I know I am dying; but, thank God, I feel prepared to die,’ were words which were more than once uttered by his failing voice. And so has passed from among us a man of splendid faculties and goodly powers—a noble preacher of the truths of religion—a dignified minister at the altar—a lover of knowledge, and an ardent advocate of its diffusion among the masses of the people—a patriot believing in the future of his native land—but, above all, a man, with a kindly, loving, tender nature, in which there was no wile and no bitterness. Many a prayer will be raised, here as elsewhere, for the soul’s happiness of ‘FATHER BUCKLEY.’”

S E R M O N S .

SERMON

IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF THE PRESENTATION
(MONKS') SCHOOLS.¹

“Now when John heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples he said to him: Art thou he that are to come, or look we for another? And Jesus making answer said to them, Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen; the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them, and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me.”—MATT. xi.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—A rumour of the preaching, and of the wondrous works of Christ reached the ears of the Baptist even in the prison cell, where he was confined by the impious and incestuous Herod. Some of his disciples, whose faith in the wonder-worker of the desert was shaken by the spectacle of his powerlessness under the scourge of the tyrant, expressed their fears and doubts concerning the divine direction and high importance of his precursorial mission. John sent two of his incredulous followers to question Christ concerning His character and functions, convinced that the answers of Jesus would remove their doubts and confirm their wavering faith. And to their interrogatories what was the answer of Christ? Whatever that answer was to

¹ Preached in St. Finbar's Church, Cork, December 17, 1865.

be, it should at least be distinguished for one thing—it should point out the precise characteristic of the mission of Jesus; it should give the marks and tokens of a missioner not human but divine; it should be an epitome of the working, and of the object to be attained by the working of the veritable Messiah. And what was that answer? “Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen; the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them.”

Amongst the poor was the mission of Jesus! Amongst the most despised and most abject of the human race; amongst the blind, the deaf, and the lame, and the leprous; amongst those whom the fastidiousness of modern civilization ostracizes from society, and shuts up in hospitals and asylums lest, forsooth, they offend the vision, and mar the pleasure of their more fortunate fellow-creatures! And what was the grand characteristic of that mission? To do good to all men; to bring joy and consolation to the bosoms of the distressed; to subvert even the immutable laws of nature in favour of the poor and the wretched; to dispense the blessings of his beneficence amongst the starving and the indigent; to give light to the blind; to give hearing to the deaf; to cleanse the leper; to make the lame to walk; but, above all, to preach the gospel to the poor! Nay, amongst the poor, he became himself the poorest, and promised a blessing to those whose faith was not shaken by his poverty—“Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me.” He knew well how shocked and disappointed the minions of wordly pomp and splendour would be by the contemplation of the long-expected Messiah establishing his kingdom amongst the poor, instead of reviving the glories of Solomon and outrivalling the magnificence of the Cæsars; but, though his wisdom outshone the wisdom of Solomon, as the sun outshines the stars, and although his power and glory surpassed the power and glory of the Cæsars as the heavens are above the earth, he preferred to assimilate himself to the meanest of his creatures, to outdo the humility of Job, and transcend even the wretchedness of Lazarus; to become despised, and the most abject of men—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity, that he might demonstrate the vanity of riches, and show that poverty of spirit is the

surest passport to his eternal kingdom. The world was scandalized in his abjectness, and hence the world shall not participate in the blessings of redemption. "Blessed is he that shall NOT be scandalized in me."

My Brethren, we, the preachers of God's word, would be indeed unworthy followers of Christ, if we did not ally ourselves with the poor, as our Divine Master did before us; if we did not employ every effort of ours to alleviate their distress; if we did not advocate their cause with the rich, and demand, in the name of justice, in the name of charity, in the name of God, the means of subsistence which God has confided to the rich in their favour.

I come to-day to address you on behalf of the children of the poor—I do not ask you now to supply their animal wants, I beg not for their food or raiment. I ask you for a higher and nobler boon. I ask you to afford them the blessings of Education, to develop the resources of their minds, to give them the heavenly gift of knowledge, to satisfy as far as possible the insatiable cravings of their souls after wisdom. Christ cleansed the leper, he gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf; he made the lame walk and raised the dead to life. There is a leprosy of ignorance which you are called upon to cure. There is a mental and spiritual blindness which you are requested to dispel. You are asked to make the lame of intellect to walk uprightly in the paths of knowledge. You are implored to preach the gospel to the poor, and thus restore the dead to life by infusing into their souls the life of truth, which can only be infused by the sublime and all-enlivening genius of the Christian religion.

I will pre-suppose that you recognize the nature of your obligation to the poor; that you know and admit the force of all that religion teaches on the subject of charity towards your neighbour; I will not remind you of the maxim that Truth has made trite, that you hold your riches only in trust for the poor; and that, according to the liberality or parsimony of your dealings with them here, will be the rewards or punishments that await you hereafter. I will confine myself to one simple issue. I will show you the misfortune to which ignorance exposes your fellow-creatures, and the blessings conferred on them by the acquisition of knowledge, in order that you may know the precise object at which your charity is requested to aim, and that

you may give the more freely according to your knowledge of the blessings you are expected to confer.

The soul of man in a state of innocence instinctively loves all that God loves. Now not only does God love truth, but God is truth. The soul, therefore, is irresistibly impelled to the love of truth—that is, the love of knowledge, for knowledge is the perception of truth. By the fall of man every faculty of his soul has been vitiated, defaced and marred; but after the sad wreck, the love of truth remained still burning in the soul, like a lamp on the tempest-tossed vessel, unquenched, unquenchable throughout the long night of time. Before the fall of man his intellect grasped knowledge as the eye grasps the light of heaven, compassing it without an effort in all its expansiveness, and glorying in its effulgence and its beauty; then the soul was ever young, quick, sprightly, serene, unclouded by passion, unbiassed by prejudice, reaching conclusions without hesitation; remembering all things and for ever, not groping in the dark as she is now, and picking up knowledge in tattered shreds and scattered fragments, ever joining together a vague patchwork of truth—indefatigable in the juncture, but ever uncertain of its aptness and ever diffident of ultimate success. In the days of her innocence knowledge came as it were unasked, unlooked for—not as it comes now, by plodding and poring, and vigils of laborious study. Indeed, born as we have been in the darkness of ignorance, and groping as we do in the vaporous atmosphere of passion and sin, it is impossible for us to form an idea of the splendour and glory of man's intellect previous to his fall, as it is impossible for the cottager dwelling by the mountain-side to conceive the unseen splendours of a palace. But from the beauty of the intellect in its state of ruin and decay, we may form some notion of its magnificence before the despoiling hand of sin had dismantled and defaced it. Glorious in her decadence, what must have been the glory and splendour of the soul in the morning-time of life, when she issued from the hand of Him to whose glorious likeness she was made! But whatever she may have lost by her fall, however she may be stripped of her beauty and her vigour, her love of truth survives; her power to acquire it, though diminished, is still vast and wondrous, and the more she acquires the knowledge of it, the more does she become

assimilated to the grand original from whose surpassing glory she has, alas! so sadly strayed. To keep the soul, therefore, in a state of ignorance, is to keep her in a state of obscurity and bondage, and to perpetuate the miseries of her fall; to deny her the water for which she thirsts, to check her flights, and crush the aspirings of her nature—to clog her with chains of earth, and permit her to wallow in the mire of passion, as if it were the only congenial element of her happiness. For the only happiness to which ignorance can aspire is the happiness derived from the gratification of the animal passions—a happiness worthy only of the brute whose life begins and ends with earth, but infinitely beneath the esteem of him who is made to the image and destined for the eternal enjoyment of his God. The mind of the ignorant man is a complete blank. He knows not whence he comes or whither he goes—of God and his wondrous works he knows nothing, he thinks nothing—why the sun rises and sets—why the midnight stars dizen the sky he never cares to inquire—he never lifts his thoughts to the mysterious eternal future in which he is destined to play so important a part, but passes from eternity to eternity across the narrow bridge of time, seeing and understanding the glories of his Maker, only when those glories are too terrible to behold.

But let the light of knowledge gradually shed its benign beams over his soul, and what wonders of joy and delight are revealed to him! I speak now only of the happiness conferred by the acquisition of what is called secular knowledge, that is, the knowledge of things abstracting from their connexion with religion; for of religious knowledge I will speak immediately. Take, for example, the study of Geography; he finds that this earth is not limited to the narrow confines of the place where he himself resides, but far away in other lands and other zones dwell men made like to him, with the same bodies, the same wants—the same passions and propensities—that for them too the sun shines, the rivers flow, the valleys bloom, the ocean spreads its bosom and wafts to their shores the merchandize of other countries and other climes. All this is joyous and delightful to discover. Let him open the page of History; he there finds the age of the world, and the records of the doings of men from the beginning down to the present hour; he reads of the rise and fall of kingdoms

and dynasties, the deeds of great men and little men, the virtues of the good and the vices of the wicked ; and his soul is filled with wonder like a child's as he gazes at the revolving splendours of the kaleidoscope. He takes up the revelations of Geology, which teaches him the construction of the interior of the earth, and describes what passes even thousands of miles beneath his feet, and he begins to find that man is indeed a wondrous being, whose ceaseless investigations are not limited to the scope of visible nature, but penetrate even into the bosom of the vast, unfathomable earth, and presume to teach him that even in the deep distant centre burns a fire which fosters the vitality of our orb, and which, as some not inaptly suppose, is the scene of posthumous suffering for the wicked amongst the children of men. He is initiated in the mysteries of Astronomy, and a new and wondrous joy is born in his breast. He finds that creation is not limited by the narrow compass of this earth, but that above and beneath and around him, in far-extending space, revolve by an unerring rule myriads of worlds larger, and to all appearances more important than his own. Thus, on through the endless discoveries of science, his mind grows and expands until he who in the beginning was but a mere animal, now that the scales of ignorance have fallen from his eyes, sees that he is a being of marvellous importance in creation, inasmuch as he has an immortal soul, capable of vast knowledge, intensely truth-loving, powerful to conceive—more powerful to execute—that it is for him all those wonders of creation exist ; that the earth brings forth its fruits for his corporeal sustenance, that the rain falls from heaven to increase the fecundity of the earth for him ; that for him the sun warms the earth and illumines the heavens ; that he is lord of the brute creation, that the creatures of the deep were made for him, that for his pleasure the birds melodize the air by their song, and brighten the landscape by their beauty—in a word, that all things great and small were made for him ; that to excite his wonder, to enhance his pleasure, to promote his convenience, to secure his happiness, the heavens are brilliant with innumerable stars, and the smallest leaf of the forest is peopled with tribes of insects.

All this man finds out by reason alone. Oh ! wondrous man ! “Thou hast made him, O God, little less than the

angels; with glory and honor hast thou crowned him, and thou hast set him over the works of thy hands." But oh! man beware! There is, and has ever been in human nature, a strong tendency to pride and self-glorification. It has never been entirely eradicated from the human soul. Man takes pride in all his endowments, forgetful that he has nothing but what he has received from God. He glories in his bodily strength and beauty, although an hour's disease may paralyze the one, and erase the lineaments of the other. He rejoices in his wealth and large possessions, because they enhance his power, and exact the unwilling homage of his fellow-mortals. He glories in honours and dignities, because they give him a fictitious importance, and place him on an imaginary pedestal for admiring eyes. But his vanity reaches its culminating point when he glories in his intellectual powers, and the extent of his intellectual acquirements. This feeling was the primal source of man's ruin—he would know as much as God. "Knowledge puffeth up," says St. Paul. And truly there is no vanity so contemptible, so utterly groundless, as the vanity of knowledge; for the greatest scholar that ever lived was never able to explore more than the mere rudiments of science. We have heard with admiration the saying of the great Philosopher on his death-bed, that so far from having acquired much wisdom, he seemed to himself to be only like a child picking pebbles on the sea-shore, while the great ocean of truth lay unexplored before him. For Knowledge is endless as the Deity, of whom omniscience is one of the noblest attributes. And indeed knowledge may be well compared to a beautiful river widening to a shoreless sea. Along the banks of that river bloom the flowers of truth, on which the wanderer gazes with delight, and which he gathers with assiduous care; but on reaching the ocean he finds that the treasures no longer adorn the banks, but lie buried in the bosom of the deep, innumerable beyond his comprehension, priceless beyond his computation, but alas! far beyond the soundings of his line.

How little then, indeed, does man know, and how absurd, how pitiable, is the vanity of knowledge: and yet this vanity of knowledge is to-day proving the bane of the world. Man confides too much in himself and his own resources. By the progress of science and the perfection

of art he has accumulated for himself all the means by which material happiness may be acquired, and the cravings of a corrupt nature gratified according to every whim of the most capricious pleasure-seeker. The question is not What man has done, but, Where is he likely to stop? Steam-vessels shoot with the speed of the arrow from our shores, and bring back the rarest luxuries of foreign climes to cater to the taste of the most fastidious voluptuary. Burning vehicles outstrip the wind, in their headlong course over boundless plains and beneath lofty mountains, giving, as it were, wings to men, and realizing, by their marvellous rapidity, more than our forefathers dared to dream. Man wrests the very lightning from heaven to convey his thoughts to his fellow-man, through every region of the globe. Huge machines give movement to gigantic workshops, and, as if by magic, set in motion innumerable instruments, and elaborate with the most wonderful precision the most delicate productions.

All this is wonderful indeed, but it tends to give man too great an idea of his own importance, an exaggerated esteem of self-reliance. It tends to wean his heart from thoughts of his *final* end. We are told that we live in a fast age; man must, it is said, keep pace with progress. Material prosperity is everything, and yet the generality of mankind are not a whit happier now than they were before the discovery of those wondrous achievements of science, those delicate refinements of pleasure. Even in countries where science and art have achieved their most splendid triumphs, the worst of vices still prevail; and I doubt not in a higher degree than they prevailed in what may be called the darkest age of learning. We still hear of shocking murders, of suicides, of robberies, monstrous peculations, of barbarous cruelties, of horrible crimes in high life and low life. The human mind is ever agitated by the same passions, and subject to the same miseries; sorrow and woe are still household words at every stage of boasted progress. Why is this? Because material prosperity is *not* everything—because all that science and art can accomplish is to please the senses; they cannot lull the storms of the soul. To her their wretched discoveries are but morsels of truth thrown before a being who hungers with intense hunger for truth eternal. These discoveries excite man's wonder. Yes, but his natural am-

bition of knowledge is too vast for wonder. We are astonished for a moment, but the mind looks forward still for something new, something more stupendous. Man finds that he is greater than those machines and master-pieces of art; his heart is an abyss which nothing can fill—give him the whole world, and the void will be the same. The depth is immeasurable. Why? Because the soul, created to the image and likeness of God, cannot be satisfied without the possession of him. Man was made for something more than material happiness; material happiness is not his end, for it is only the boon of the privileged few—the wealthy and the noble. If he were to live here for ever, he might honestly concentrate all the energies of his soul in the pursuit of worldly pleasure, but he has an immortal part which nothing earthly can satisfy—a soul which will survive the most wonderful discoveries of physical science, and which, when art shall have reached its acme in procuring aids to pleasure, will still feel a void which art cannot fill—a craving which all the pleasures of earth cannot appease.

Far be it from me to say, that man should set a limit to the pursuit of science or the cultivation of art. On the contrary, I plead the cause of those twin-sisters—I am the advocate of their clients. Science is god-like; art, though human, is the means by which God wishes man to procure the necessities of life, to provide the enjoyment of rational pleasure. But man must never forget that he has a soul, which, I repeat, will survive when art will have perished, and when the body can no longer be the recipient of enjoyment. “Knowledge puffeth up,” says St. Paul, “charity edifies.” Knowledge, of itself, only inflames the vanity and self-sufficiency of man. Charity, that is, the love of God, turns knowledge to good account, and makes it instrumental in working out the true happiness of mankind. He who teaches man the mysteries of science and art, does well; but he who teaches man only science and art and neglects to inform him of his eternal destiny, and the means by which that destiny can be fulfilled, effects no more than the skilful trainer effects by teaching sagacious brutes to imitate the voice and gestures of man. But he who teaches man to save his soul—his immortal soul—to secure for himself, not the transient pleasures of an hour, but the durable delights of eternity, to love God here

and enjoy him hereafter, he is the true teacher—the true philosopher—the true philanthropist, whose glory will shed unfading lustre in a land where the proudest names on the fame-roll of worldlings shall sink into eternal oblivion. Yes, “they who instruct others unto justice shall shine like stars for all eternity.”

X Hence the holy Catholic Church has ever watched with anxious eye over the education of her children. “Going therefore, teach all nations,” said Christ to her; and faithfully has she fulfilled her mission. By the light of learning, sacred and profane, she guided nations from the gloom of barbarism to the sunshine of civilization; and now that petulant men, in their extravagant self-reliance, threaten to ignore the guidance once so welcome, and relapse into their pristine darkness, she stimulates, exhorts, implores them to hear her voice, and beware of the ruin towards which they madly rush. Regardless of their coldness, indifference, or vituperation, she stands unflinching, and persists in her solemn monotone of warning and exhortation, founded in truth and confident of ultimate success, resembling some ancient temple whose majestic form still survives the wreck of time, and stands immovable and entire while cities and towns have flourished and decayed around it. Nay, while kingdoms and empires have risen, been convulsed, and fallen, the Church stands—after centuries of revolutions and changes—her cupola refulgent in the light of heaven, and, by its majestic proportions, dwarfing all surrounding structures—the same to-day as she was when she sprang fresh and young from the creative hand of the Saviour, and as she will stand when she resigns her charter into the hands of the same Saviour on the judgment day, amid the terrible glories of Jehosaphat.

Her very enemies admit her vast and beneficent influence on the destinies of man; they revere her as a time-honoured institution. But God is not content with these avowals of philosophy; he showers down the torrents of his grace from on high, and his Holy Spirit is diffused over the face of the earth. In every age, in every clime, in every phase of tepidity and unbelief, men are found to step forward from the crowd and proclaim their willingness to be heroes in the fight. Meeting their spiritual foes single-handed, or banded together for the conflict, they preach the gospel

to the poor, they feed the hungry and clothe the naked, they release the captive and emancipate the slave. They carry the gospel light amongst the savage races of men, they fill the void which I have shown to exist in the human breast, after all the discoveries of science and all the contrivances of art.

My Brethren, a body of such men appeal to you to-day, in one of the noblest causes ever proposed for the approval of mankind—the education of the children of the poor. They are a body of holy men, whose saintly virtues and unblemished lives eminently qualify them for the task of instructing the ignorant in the ways of God. They are unselfish men, sacrificing, for God's sake, all chances of worldly emolument and social comfort; regardless of profit and praise, they court poverty and obscurity, content with the applause of God and the hope of an eternal reward. They are intelligent men, who are as incessant in the acquisition of knowledge as they are competent to impart it. Working on in your midst, noiselessly and unpretentiously, they are amongst the greatest benefactors of the community; for, by their instructions, they fashion youths who, with God's blessing, will be future honest, industrious, moral artisans of your city; but who, without the instruction they receive, would become the incubus, if not the pest, of society. I advocate the cause of the Lancasterian schools in this city, the oldest educational establishment in Cork, and one of the best, whether we consider its spacious and elegant interior, the plentiful supply of school necessities, the large number of pupils frequenting it, the programme of education, or the capacity of the teachers. As far as the appliances of education are concerned, they would be scanty indeed—if they could be at all procured—only for the beneficence of a charitable public. The establishment is connected with the Board of National Education, but the support received from that body is utterly inadequate to the wants of the thousand children who pass yearly through those schools. I wish to insist, once for all, on this point, as an impression is abroad that the schools of the Presentation Monks can work efficiently without the support of the public. That impression is utterly groundless; and, for my part, I am satisfied that if these schools could subsist without your charity they would be prevented from coming before the public *in forma pauperis* by the

just and wise Prelate whose sanction is necessary for every appeal they make.

To sum up, therefore, all that I have said on this subject, let me remind you that there is in the Soul of man an inherent love of truth, and that the gratification of this love is one of the most refined pleasures, and one of the choicest blessings which it is possible for man, while in this life, to enjoy. Knowledge teaches man what he is, whence he came, what is his end, what are the means of procuring that happiness for which he incessantly sighs ; it teaches him to acquire temporal prosperity ; but, far better than all that, it constantly whispers in his ear that he has an immortal soul, which is bound to obey the commands of God, and thereby to be eternally happy with God hereafter. Oh ! my Brethren, “what indeed will it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul?” Far better for him who lives in the obscurity of ignorance, untaught and unlettered, who dies with the love of God in his soul, than he whose genius fathomed the profoundest secrets of nature, but in whose soul God had no place. Alas ! these serious, all-important truths are ignored, nay, scoffed at by the many who raise their voices in the cause of knowledge. Pity it should be so ! But the uncompromising Church will not forego her right to protect the lambs and sheep of Christ’s fold ; she has ever been the patroness of learning, but she has never forgotten the words of the Apostle to which I have more than once referred, “Knowledge puffeth up—charity edifies.” The brethren on whose behalf I speak are the accredited envoys of the Church, and animated with the same spirit. As far as they are permitted to do, within the restrictions of a system not altogether faultless, they blend the religious element with the profane. And surely it would be hard if the Christian teacher was not permitted, while expounding the secrets of nature, to describe the power, and wisdom, and beauty of Nature’s God ; it would be hard, indeed, if, while depicting the wonders of this world, he should keep silent on the mysterious truths of the next ; such a reticence would be unworthy of the teacher, as it would be fatal to the most vital interests of the pupil. I shall not trespass further on your patience. I trust I have spoken nothing but what is warranted by the teaching of the gospel and the practice of the Church. I have endea-

voured, to the best of my ability, not to do so. The generosity of your contributions will be the best test of your approval. I leave the cause of the children of the poor in your hands. May God stimulate your charity in their behalf, and grant you in return the happiness of enjoying for all eternity the blessed society of him who from Bethlehem to Calvary was the Father, the Friend, the Saviour of the Poor !

SERMON

IN AID OF THE PRESENTATION (NUNS') SCHOOLS.¹

“Put on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil; for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armour of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, (which is the word of God). By all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the spirit, and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints, and for me that speech may be given me, that I may open my mouth with confidence, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador.”—ST. PAUL TO EPH. vi. 11.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—God, being the great Spirit, can be worshipped only in spirit; being Truth itself, he can be worshipped only in truth. Man, carnal and corrupt from his fall, during the first four thousand years of his history, either sought to propitiate God by gross oblations of the flesh and blood of beasts, utterly destitute of grace and life and spirit, or turned away altogether from the truth, and bowed down before false representations of his Maker. And this he would have continued to do to the end, unless enlightened by the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, “the only Begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.” When that light was removed from the world, man would still have been dark, carnal, and corrupt, unless some source were

¹ Preached in the Cathedral, Cork, October 17, 1869.

established to which he might recur for enlightenment of soul and purity of heart. And, in the divine wisdom that source was created—it was no other than the holy Catholic Church, the spouse of Christ, the Rock of Ages, the sole and infallible depository of truth. She received from his hands her Charter, sealed with the divine seal, and expressed in words brief and clear, “Go and teach all nations: and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” And what is it her commission, her duty, to teach? Nought else save “whatsoever I have commanded you.” The Church dare not, could not teach anything but what Christ taught, and “through honor and dishonor, through infamy and good name,” she teaches, and teaches only, the lessons of him who was for all mankind “the way, the truth, and the life.”

This is for Christians the great blessing, the saving consolation—that they possess the truth; that in religious doctrine they enjoy an absolute freedom from error and doubt; that they learn from the Church of Christ only what Christ taught, and what he would teach was he still on earth; that their faith is not a matter of uncertainty, a thing of speculation, a mere feeling to be taken up or laid aside at pleasure, but a fixed principle based on God’s unerring word, and the infallible pledge of true happiness here, and eternal glory hereafter.

The Christian, therefore, who is enlightened in the teachings of his faith, will make no compromise with error; will, if necessary, fight for the truth, suffer—nay, die for it; for man’s greatest glory should be, by the defence of God’s truth to promote, even at the sacrifice of his life, the glory of him to whom alone, immortal and invisible, all glory is due. And so did the Christians of the early Church, when troubles and persecutions first threatened them; even in the inoffensive privacy of their chosen retreats, they were perplexed by the novelty of the circumstances, and recurred for advice to the Prince of the Apostles. And what did he write to them in reply? Did he tell them to resist, to deny the truth, to dissimulate, to fly from the danger? No; but he exhorted them to persist in the practices of sanctity and innocence, to worship God in spirit and in truth, to make no change in the rectitude of their conduct—for that only thus would they convince their enemies of the error of their thoughts. “So,” said

he, "is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." And so they acted ; so they suffered ; but so they triumphed.

The spirit that animates the Church at one period is that which animates it at all other periods, namely, "the spirit of truth which abides in her for ever." She is not the victim of change, the plaything of fortune, the pliant instrument of man's pleasure and caprice, the venal caterer to human passion. No ; she is, in the language of the Apostle, "sanctified and cleansed by the laver of water in the word of life, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without a blemish," ever young and vigorous, zealous and powerful to do the work of God in the nineteenth century as in the first ; everlasting as God's word, while other institutions grow effete and crumble into ruin. She is essentially the Church militant, surrounded by foes on every side, nay, nursing vipers in her own bosom. The thirteen who sat in the supper-room of Jerusalem, the nucleus of this great Church, had a traitor at their board. That company was the type of the Church to all times—enemies plotting against her without, her own children devising ruin within ; yet, she pursues her way steadily and undeviatingly, and the hour of her apparent humiliation is but the era of some new victory over the snares of her assailants. For, she has within her the inexhaustible resources of success, the promise of Christ to be with her for all ages, and the purity and holiness of her children, against which, even in her cradle, the ferocity of the Roman emperors was ineffectual, and which, now that she flourishes in the full vigour of maturity, may well defy the combined machinations of earth and hell.

As, in the early ages of the Church, martyrs and confessors stood forward to do battle with the powers of darkness, so, within the fold to-day, abound unconscious heroes of the faith, ready, if called upon, to work miracles of self-sacrifice in the cause of God—so has it ever been, so shall it ever be. Men and women in every age, of every rank in life, of every phase of intelligence—gentle youths and tender virgins abandon the world and its vanities, and seek refuge in the silent depths of solitude, that their eyes may not be blinded by the clouds of passion ; that, in the serene atmosphere of innocence, they may ever behold

the pure eternal light of truth. And many, not content with enjoying themselves this inestimable blessing, have combined to enlighten their fellow-men, from whom, otherwise, this glorious vision would be for ever hidden. Witness the innumerable monks and nuns in every age, and throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, who surrender all for Christ that they may gain all for him ; men and women who, in the cause of mankind, suffer every privation and bear burdens to which human strength appears unequal, astounding the incredulous by their gigantic undertakings, and displaying to the eyes of the faithful the finger of God in their marvellous successes. And how is this ? How is it that only in the Christian Church we can discover that splendid spectacle of man sacrificing himself for man ? Amongst the Pagan natives of antiquity we have had examples of many exalted virtues, examples of men who surpassed in wisdom, in justice, in fortitude, in temperance, equanimity, and courage. But love of man for man, what the world calls philanthropy, was nowhere to be found ; on the contrary, cruelty was the rule. The Romans regarded all those as barbarians who were not subject to their sway. They made war on foreign nations without a pretext. They ravaged, burned, ruined all before them. The innocent captives, kings and queens, and their unhappy children, whose only crime was that they defended with too much gallantry their altars and their homes ; they slaughtered in the capitol without mercy. Masters could torture or put to death their slaves without being accountable to the law. Fathers could slay their children in the cradle, if they did not wish to support them. Gladiators were arrayed against each other in the theatres, and were forced to fight even to the death. In a word, human life was held as if it were of no value ; pity, mercy, lenity, were virtues either unknown or despised amongst the polished citizens of Rome. No less inhumanity prevailed amongst the Greeks ; many cruel customs were sanctioned by their laws, were made religious rites, were approved of by the philosophers of the land, some of whom rank with the wisest and the greatest of mankind. If the people of these highly civilized nations indulged in such atrocities, to what depths of cruelty and inhumanity must the other nations of the earth have descended ? How is this to be accounted for ? That amongst the

many virtues practised by the civilized peoples of antiquity, one virtue, [namely charity, or the love of man for man, alone, was conspicuous by its absence. In this manner is it explained; their virtues were only spurious, shallow and unreal; the tinsel and not the gold; their motives were not pure and disinterested; pride, vanity, and self-seeking, were at the bottom of all their works; and therefore, charity alone was wanting, because the very essence of love is unselfishness. Moreover charity is a divine virtue. It must have for its origin and its motive the pure love of God; and of this latter love the pagans were altogether destitute. Indeed, charity was the virtue which Christ came specially on earth to infuse into the hearts of men. "I came," said he, "to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be enkindled?" It was a new commandment. "A new commandment I give you," said he to his apostles, "that you love one another." Nay, he proclaims himself to be the author of this new commandment. "This is my commandment," said he, "that you love one another, even as I have loved you." The virtue of charity, then, was up to this time untaught, unknown, unseen in the world. No doubt, in the Old Law it was written, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and so far the commandment was old. But now, for the first time, were the mode and character of this love explained. Before this, men might understand that they should love each other, but now, for the first time, we learn the nature of that love, "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another, *even as I have loved you.*" Our love for our neighbour must be like the love of Christ for us, pure, disinterested, self-sacrificing even to death, having for its motive the glory of God, seeking to win every human soul to him who made it, and who longs to enjoy it for ever.

This charity, then, is the great new precept and practice and glory of the Church of Christ. It ramifies itself through all the relievable necessities of mankind. It clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, and gives drink to the thirsty—it visits the sick and imprisoned—it consoles the wretched, it sustains the weak and invigorates the weary; it stands by the cradle of infancy, which it watches, fosters, and protects; it follows the young man through all the phases of moral danger to which youth and passion

expose him ; it is found at the bedside of the dying, in the person of the priest or other spiritual consoler, and never quits the spot, until the soul, which is the object of its care, passes into the hands of him who is at the same time its Creator, its Judge and its Reward.

Now of all the necessities of mankind, education is undoubtedly the greatest. They who "sit in darkness" sit "in the shadow of death." Without faith it is impossible to please God. And what is faith but enlightenment? We must know God before we believe in him. Hence education is the prime object of charity, and hence in the promotion of education the Church has in all ages shown herself to be most anxious, energetic, and untiring. Seeing, then, the necessity of this education, it is no wonder that Christ should have given the Church that charter of which we have spoken, "Going, teach all the nations of the earth." There is only one God, and only in one way can that One be worshipped. Unity, then, is the maxim of the Church. She cannot suffer her children to teach themselves, for she should have within her bosom the thousand evils that spring from private judgment, errors, disputes, factions, enmities, a breach of charity all over the world. She holds in her hand the Lamp of Truth. All those who will be her children must follow unwaveringly that luminous beacon. Those who will not submit to her guidance, who turn away from that light, must share the fate of the reckless mariner who lets himself adrift on a stormy sea, without a rudder or a compass to direct his course, without a star in the sky to point his way.

But, within the Church, pure and holy and wise as she is, there have ever been rebellious children, proud spirits that will not brook dictation, men wise in their own imaginings, who shake off the salutary bridle of authority, and roam free over the wilds whither their fancy and license will conduct them. Those wise men, on the question of education, say that the Church has no right to interfere, that she outsteps the bounds of her commission ; that she makes too much noise about the religious element, that she should confine herself to the domains of conscience, and allow men in the world to take charge of concerns which are purely secular ; that she is bigoted, old-fashioned, conservative, with a great deal more, by no means flattering ; that the parent should educate the child

as he wishes, and that the Church has no right to deprive him of this privilege.

Now, in all these assertions there is a vast deal of error and false reasoning. The Church has pre-eminently a right to interfere in education, because she has got a commission from on High to teach all the nations of the earth; she cannot make too much noise about the religious element, because religion is the most important concern of mankind: she should confine herself to the domain of conscience, and so she does, for everything that man does, from the dawn of reason to its setting, is an affair of conscience, and for it he must render an account to his Almighty Judge. If to be steadfast, unflinching, and uncompromising, is to be bigoted, then she is bigoted—she will never resign the sacred trust placed in her hands by her Divine Ruler. She is conservative—and well for mankind that she is so—the conservative custodian of the Truth, which never varies or changes, or accommodates itself to the fluctuating opinions of men. She is not old-fashioned, but she is ever young and unwrinkled, as I have proved from the words of St. Paul. The parent has a right to educate his child, but the parent must obey the voice of the Church on that as upon all other matters, in which the salvation of himself and his child is involved, otherwise let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.

We are all aware that, in this country, in the matter of education, the action of the Church is sadly marred, and that dangers surround the child which can only be averted by the extreme vigilance and care of its spiritual protectors. It is well known that some enemies of our religion have been favourable to the present system of State education, because they regarded it as a powerful means of weaning the minds of Catholic children from the true faith. And they endeavoured, very unscrupulously, to avail of it for that end. But for the unceasing watchfulness of the Catholic clergy, those watchdogs in the House of Israel, those insidious attempts might, in many instances, have been attended with a too fatal success. The desire of the clergy at the present moment is, that the whole system should be abolished or reformed, so as to render the education of our children what it ought to be, namely, an education teaching them to see in all things the existence

of the power, the beauty and the love of their Creator; his action in the universe, his intimate relation to man in all the phases of his existence and essence, instead of introducing his name, as it were, surreptitiously, or, not introducing it at all, forbidding the expression of reverence to him or to his holy Mother, or his Saints; and, at the very best placing that religion which his Divine Son taught upon earth, on a level with the other sciences, as if it were merely a good useful thing to be learned, helping to fit a man for intercourse with the world, and not a principle ramifying itself with the dearest, the most vital, the eternal interests of the whole human race. Many courageous communities of Catholic teachers, filled with the spirit of God and a zeal for the salvation of souls, have attempted to teach without the assistance of the State, and to bring up children at once in the love of their Maker, and in a knowledge of his creation and its wonders; for that is the true education of man. Their success has been worthy of their exalted motives. Witness the schools of the Christian Brothers all over Ireland, and especially in this our own city. Is it not an institution of which we are most sensitively proud? Do we not point it out to strangers as one of the admirable things to be seen amongst us? And in schools like these are children brought up in feelings of sectarian bitterness? Far from it; they are, on the contrary, taught to love their neighbours as themselves. And when you ask who is their neighbour, they will answer, "Mankind of every description, and without any distinction of person, even those who injure us or differ from us in religion."

Such is also the institution whose cause I plead this day—the schools of the North Presentation Nuns—where hundreds of female children are educated by holy and enlightened ladies who bear in their retreat the mark of that rank which they held in society, and whose all-absorbing desire now is, to give glory to God by saving the souls of those little children whom he so dearly loves. These sisters have rejected all overtures made to them by the Board of National Education. They would be free and independent to bring up the young female population of the parish in those principles of piety which, where the female mind is concerned, are far more valuable than all the knowledge that could be acquired of secular things.

No greater boon can be conferred on a parish than a pious womanhood, as there is no greater curse than woman when she is ignorant of her duties, and regardless of moral restraint. A good woman in a household is more precious than gold—her influence pervades it like a sweet perfume—vice flies abashed before her face, virtue grows like a garden of rare and beauteous flowers in the sunshine of her presence—while in the circle of the wicked mother, blight and decay shed their baneful odours around. From that unhappy spot religion takes flight, and sin with its sister sorrow fixes its unhallowed abode. You are asked this day to do what you have been doing for years—to assist this pious community in carrying on the good work of bringing up your female population in the acquirement of that knowledge, and in that fear and love of God, which may make them the blessings of their homesteads, and the future mothers of faithful Irish children. This you will do, because it is the work of God—because it is a means of combating the designs of the evil one—because it will proclaim your approval of a system where religion is taught without the trammels of State regulations—because it will be an expression of your faith, a pronouncement of the truth, an appeal to your rulers for justice, a preaching of the gospel of peace. And now you will understand the full force of the sacred words with which I prefaced this discourse, and of which all that I have said may be considered as a paraphrase, “Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.”

May God inspire you to do a work which he loves so well, to bring those little children to him, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

SERMON

IN AID OF THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' SCHOOLS,
CORK.¹

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."—LUKE, xxi. 33.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—In this world man leads a life of continual perplexity and bewilderment, distracted by the good and evil suggestions of his heart. Before his fall he loved the light, for he saw that it was good: but his spiritual vision, obscured by sin, caused him frequently to confound the lucid outlines of Truth with the vague linaments of Error. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." Since man's eternal destiny, for weal or woe, depends upon his just discernment of these two great principles—Truth and Error, which may be also called Light and Darkness, it is, as it were, incumbent on the All-Just Being who created him, that some standard should be erected in his bosom, by which he may become the arbiter of their respective claims to his adoption. And so it is: God has given each human being a conscience, for the purpose of determining what is true and what is false, what is lightsome and what is dark, what is right and what is wrong. We all recognise the existence of this standard in our breasts. If left to itself, conscience would be an infallible test; but as we grow up, and mix with our fellows in a world of sin and falsehood, it requires constant correction and regulation; it wants a continual infusion of celestial light to dispel the clouds that beset it. This light is imparted by teachers and good example. Where these auxiliaries of conscience are at hand, blessings abound;

¹ Preached in the Cathedral, Cork, March 7, 1860.

where they are wanting, the soul, tossed on the troublous ocean of life, drifts in darkness to everlasting ruin.

This may be illustrated by a comparison from Nature. There are men who live in pits and mines, who are born in them, and never see the light of day : who dig, and delve, and take their pleasure thousands of feet below the earth, and die without having ever beheld the sun in the heavens face to face. They are careless to ascend, for they dream not of the glories of the supernal world. But let one be brought up from his dark depths, and let him stand on a green hillock some fine midsummer day ; let him bask for an hour in the genial warmth of the air ; let his eyes roam abroad over the green fields, and the purple mountains, and the sparkling rivers ; let him behold the majestic wonders of the forest, and the variegated beauties of the garden ; instead of the overhanging rock that roofed his natal cave, let him gaze on the bright blue arch of heaven, and see the silver clouds that streak it : why, if he goes back without a sigh to his darkness and his filth, he is an object of our woofulest pity ; but if he seek to dwell in the new world he has found, we admire the wondrous plan of nature, by which the human soul instinctively clings to the beautiful—by which it intensely longs for the light. Thus, the same human soul, dwelling in the caverns of moral corruption, with the light of its conscience buried and dimmed, dies as it lives, hearing of God, catching uncertain glimpses of the Truth, groping on to the end, unconscious or heedless of its destiny, unless it be enlightened from above.

Man being a reasoning creature, cannot, like the brute, be content to journey onward without some guide. He is forced, by his very nature, to follow some standard, whether of Truth or Error. He must adopt some principle of right or wrong, and act up to it. Just as men in mines, deprived of heaven's light, invent lamps of their own ; so, if man be not enlightened by the eternal Sun of Justice, he makes to himself, as it were, torches to pick his way as best he can. He is impelled by nature to love the truth ; if he do not love it, he turns even to falsehood, and strives to persuade himself that it is true.

Now, if men's conscience in this world were in accordance with, or regulated according to, the unerring standard of truth, what should we find ? Should we not find, think

you, a love and a seeking of all that is truly great, and noble, and pure, and everlasting? Should we not see this creature, Man, filled with admiration of the God who made him, studying the attributes of the Infinite, and marvelling at their sublimity and their beauty? Should we not see him trembling lest he may be led by any chance away down into the pits and caverns of worldliness, relegated from the light, and the freedom, and the peace above? Yes. But, alas! how different is the picture we do behold: man forsakes his God, and bows down before idols—before wealth, and rank, and fame, and what he, in the wilful falseness of his heart, calls pleasure. He turns his back upon the light, and goes down deliberately into the darkness, through the gross medium of error that envelops the souls of men like an atmosphere. In that chosen region of obscurity, every one is regarded as mean and contemptible who is not rich, or exalted, or renowned. The man of genius, of integrity, of honour, the God-loving and truly worthy man is despised, although in his genius and his worth he shows forth the wisdom, the purity, and the grace of his Creator, who made him what he is. He is not wealthy—let him be cast aside. But let him have wealth, and the glare of his gold obscures all his shortcomings—it matters not how weak, how treacherous, how fickle, how ignorant, how vicious he may be, bow down before him, adoring world, for he is—rich. We wonder at the folly of the Israelites, that people so favoured by God, worshipping in his stead a golden calf. What shall we say of Christians who call themselves enlightened, enacting the wretched scene over again, three thousand years after, in every region of the globe? But the world has other idols besides gold. She worships rank. Let some favoured creature of hers descend from what is called an ancient stock—as if one stock were not as ancient as another; let him evince no peculiar dignity of person, no strange elevation of mind; nay, if he be remarkable for anything, let it be for wickedness and immorality—all is forgiven, because he had some ancestor who, by force of arms slew innocent thousands, or perpetrated some other splendid crime, and won a name among the so-called “great ones” of the world. The transmission of that name, through a series of generations, wipes out every moral blemish, and heightens every imagined perfection.

But should he have neither wealth, nor rank, let him acquire fame by any means—by some gigantic scheme of cruelty or fraud—by some peculiar audacity of vice—by some accidental propulsion into a conspicuous position—every one talks of him, men boast of having seen him; his words are listened to with marked attention, and carefully noted down and recorded. He is envied for his notoriety. He achieves the triumph ambitioned by the many, the triumph of making, as they say, a “noise in the world.” Yes. Wealth, and rank, and fame. “These are thy gods, O Israel.” Alas! are not the world’s wayfarers truly groping their way through caverns by wretched torchlight of their own invention, instead of going up above and beholding things as they are, in the pure sunlight of heaven!

And oh! for him whose conscience is enlightened by this heavenly light, who sees things as they truly are, and loves their beauty as the emanation of the All-Beautiful, what a change of soul, and thought, and feeling, when, to quote the golden words of the most illustrious convert of this century, “they first begin to see, with the eyes of the soul, with the intuition which grace gives, Jesus the Sun of Justice, and the Heaven of Angels and Archangels in which he dwells; and the bright Morning Star, which is the Blessed Mary; and the continual floods of light falling and striking against the earth, and transformed as they fall into an infinity of hues, which are the saints, and the boundless sea, which is the image of divine immensity; and then again, the calm, placid Moon by night, which images his Church, and the silent Stars, like good and holy men, travelling on, in lonely pilgrimage, to their eternal rest. Such was the surprise, such the transport which came upon the favoured disciples, whom, on one occasion, our Lord took up with him to the top of Thabor. He left the sick world, the tormented, restless multitude at its foot, and he took them up, and was transfigured before them. ‘His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light,’ and they lifted up their eyes, and saw on either side of him a bright form; these were two saints of the elder covenant, Moses and Elias, who were conversing with him. How truly was this a glimpse of heaven! the holy apostles were introduced into a new range of ideas, into a new sphere of contemplation, till St. Peter, overcome with the vision, cried out, ‘Lord,

it is good to be here: let us make three tabernacles.' He would have kept those heavenly glories always with him; everything on earth, the brightest, the fairest, the noblest, paled, and dwindled away and turned to corruption before them; its most substantial good was vanity, its richest gain was dross, its keenest joy a weariness, and its sin a loathsomeness and abomination. And such as this in its measure is the contrast to which the awakened soul is witness, between the objects of its admiration and pursuit in its natural state, and those which burst upon it when it has entered into communion with the Church Invisible, 'when it has come to Mount Sion, and to the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the multitude of many thousand angels, and to the Church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just now perfected, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament.'"

Where then shall we find this light to guide us through the spiritual darkness of this world? Where, but with him who is "the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." Where, but with him who is "the way, the truth, and the life"—the way of peace—the truth that scatters the clouds of ignorance and error—the life that chases the shadow of death? In a word, the only light of gospel-truth—the only passport to true peace and joy, whether temporal or eternal, is—to be a Christian.

For time rolls on in its noiseless but certain course, and, like the leaves of the forest, generations flourish and decay. Garrulous man babbles forth his inane speculations and theories, until his voice is hushed in the grave. The most lasting monuments of his power, his genius, or his folly perish with time—they crumble into dust—they are scattered like chaff before the wind. The years of his life pass like so many hours, and he goes for ever to another land, where his theories are tested by Eternal Truth, and alas! found wanting in the balance. All things change and pass, but the law of Christ remains fixed and everlasting, never to be altered, never to be revoked. Yes. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words," says Christ, "shall not pass away." "Follow me," says Christ. Yes, the only way to be saved, and not to perish like all other things of earth, is to be a follower of Christ—that is to be—a Christian.

It is well that we should understand very clearly what it is to be a Christian—what are the marks and tokens of the true Christian's character, that we may know, in truth, whether we belong to that sacred fold, within which only are earthly peace, and the assurance of celestial joy. What then is a Christian? A follower, I have said, of Christ. And what is it to follow Christ? To do as Christ did—to do what Christ has commanded us to do. We are not asked to work miracles as Christ did; nor to perform those heroic acts of virtue of which he has set us so brilliant an example. No. We are asked only to fight the battle of eternal life, even in the lowest ranks of the spiritual army. Christ is our model: but this only means that we should strive to imitate him—that there should be nothing in our conduct at variance with his teaching and example. How, then, shall we follow Christ? “Learn of me,” he says, “for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” And the first words that fell from his lips upon the mountain are a benediction on the humble. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Indeed the whole character of the Christian might be summed up in that one word “humility;” for, as pride is the source of all our sin, so humility is the foundation of all our virtue. If I speak with irreverence of God—if I blaspheme his holy name—if I refuse to worship him—is it not because my natural, sinful pride whispers to me that such homage to the Deity is not due from me, that such worship is unworthy of my intelligence, is beneath the dignity of my nature? On the other hand, what a sublime aspect does the human soul present, when she, mindful of her source, of her dependence, of her fall, of her salvation, of her destiny, humbly prostrates herself before the Almighty Being who created her, and confesses her lowliness in comparison to his incomprehensible, unspeakable majesty! So far, the difference between pride and humility, in reference to God. In the relation of man to man, let us see the different operations of these spiritual affections. If I refuse to honour my parent, is it not because I fancy I am as good, as worthy, as excellent as he? If I injure my neighbour, or refuse to forgive him, is it not because I imagine he has unwarrantably trespassed on my rights and privileges? If I steal from him, is it not because I think that he has what I

fancy should be mine? If I bear false witness against him, is it not to aggrandize myself? Behold the trail of the serpent, pride over all the actions of the sinner! If you thus in all things seek yourself, you shall find—yourself; you shall find the gratification of your passions, and the retribution which Passion deserves. But if you follow Christ—if you adopt his standard of humility, you shall, to use his words, “find rest for your souls.” “You shall humble yourself here, only that you may be exalted for ever hereafter.”

In the wildest dreams of philosophers concerning the perfection of man, there never appeared so magnificent a type as a Christian. For, in their loftiest examples, the mainspring of what they called virtue was pride, ambition, the lust of praise, what a mundane poet has called “a longing after immortality,” but of earth. Who amongst them ever presented the picture of sublime virtue, as described by St. Paul, when painting charity, which is, in truth, nothing more or less than Christianity? “Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” And when we meet such men in the world, we instinctively honour them, for we behold in them a reflection of the mildness, the sweetness, the loveliness of Jesus, their model, their strength, and their hope. There are many, no doubt, who do not conceive this exalted admiration of the Christian character. There are even some who call themselves Christians who pretend to despise it; some, who in every Christian virtue see only some human weakness, who describe meekness as servility, humility as abject weakness, patience as cowardice, forgiveness as dishonour. These people have the light, but “the light which is in them,” as the Scripture says, is “darkness.” No man is really so free, so strong, so brave, so honorable, so truth-loving, so philanthropic, so patriotic—in a word, so much all that the world applauds, as a Christian. He is free to do all but sin. So far, he is like to God himself, for even God is not free to err; he is strong, for he resists the most powerful temptations of his spiritual enemies; he is brave, for he conquers the greatest of tyrants, his own passions, to which your “great ones of the world” succumb without a struggle. He is honourable,

for you can never make him flinch from his conscientious conviction of what is truly just; he is truth-loving, for Truth is the sole standard of his conduct; he is philanthropic, for charity, the love of his neighbour, is to him the same as his love for himself. He loves his country, for patriotism is a natural and a noble instinct of all good men. He loves to dwell with pride on the glories of his country, or with pity on the misfortunes of her past. As the Israelites of old, in their Egyptian bondage, addressed their beloved Jerusalem, he exclaims to his native land: "If I forget thee, let my right hand be forgotten, let my tongue cleave to my jaws if I do not remember thee." He prays for his country, that, if she be prosperous, she may bear her prosperity with thanksgiving and moderation, and, if she be stricken amongst the nations of the earth, he prays that she may never lose hope in him who scattered the hosts of Pharaoh and made a dry path amidst the waters for the chosen children of his love. Now, my brethren, we would be all these things if our conscience were, so to speak, let alone. But, as I have said, in this world of sin and error, our conscience ever goes astray; it requires correction and regulation by teaching and good example; in a word, it requires proper, true, that is, Christian education. This education must begin as soon as reason dawns upon the soul. "Train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it." What, then, is this education?

Education, as the word implies, is a development and an expansion—a development of the most generous instincts, an expansion of the most legitimate wants of life. To discover in the soul of a child that natural love of all that is truly great and noble, all that is profound and all that is sublime, and to give to those high instincts a harmonious expansion and fruitful development—that is, Education. Now, the most legitimate and the most sublime natural want of the human soul is a want of God. The religious instinct is the most delicate, the most sublime, it might be called the most divine, instinct of man—it is, as it were, the natural yearning for the Infinite. Hence, religion is the first passion of the soul, religion is its last resource; and when the hour of death approaches, and the other passions no longer assert their sway, this divine passion of religion breaks forth with all its force from the trammels

of servitude in which it had been held for years ; the soul, with its hunger and thirst for the Infinite, tends to God as its natural element, without whom is gasping and death ; the first yearning of the heart becomes the last. The soul of the child, so long as it is not spoiled by sin, is sympathetic with God ; the harmonies of religion respond to the harmonies of its heart, exercising on it a most sweet seductiveness. The child needs to adore ; it opens its heart to God, and God enters as to a dwelling-place. When Religion comes and says to the young soul : " Behold your God," the child recognizes him as a friend who guards the portal of its dwelling ; it must enter and share the sweet familiarity of that lovely guardian, it seeks his caresses and benediction, and with inexpressible delight falls at his knees, and cries from the depths of its heartfelt affection, " Our Father."

Where, then, are we likely to find this Christian education in its highest development ? Where, if not in the Christian schools ? such as those whose advocate I am this day ; schools where thousands of children learn those sweet lessons that foster the sacred seed implanted by nature in their bosoms ; where they are taught that from God they come, and to God they go ; where they learn to see him in all nature, in the earth, and ocean, and air ; in the tropical heat and the arctic snows, in the bright sun, the mild moon, and the gentle stars ; to trace him in the fields of science, in the speculations of philosophy, in the revelations of history ; to understand his connexion with creation, with the constitution of nature, the course of the world, the origin of society, the fortunes of nations, the action of the human mind ; never to leave him out of sight ; to tear to pieces the sophistries by which worldlings seek to do away with a godhead, to make no compromise with Error, but to build each utterance of the mind and heart on the solid basis of Eternal Truth. Nay more, Christian teachers do not forget that man is a citizen of the world, that he is under obligations to society ; they teach him obedience to the laws, charity towards his fellow-men, love for his native land.

Such is the teaching of the Christian Brothers. What is their example, that other influential operator on the human conscience ? An example the purest, the holiest, the most beautiful, the most inspiring that shines on earth ;

the example of men who tear themselves from the world and its thousand affections, that they may do the work of God ; who cultivate in themselves the virtues they would implant in the breasts of their disciples ; who walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and work their souls, and hearts, and intellects that they may induce others to walk after them in those " paths of peace." But I shall not paint for you the virtues of those saintly men, nor laud the endowments of their minds, for you know them better than I can pourtray them ; nor shall I cause the honest blush of shame to suffuse their cheeks by any praises of mine that may reach their ears. They are agents in the hands of God for the noblest end proposed to manhood—the moral improvement of their fellow-men. They are scions of that ancient and venerable stock, the monastic institution, blooming for well-nigh eighteen centuries in the garden of the Christian Church, and producing fruit which angels alone may gather and compute. Many a storm has raged around that old and venerable tree ; many a pitiless hail-shower of tyranny has shorn its branches bare, and many a ruthless hand has striven to uproot it from the soil. But storms blow over, and tyrants perish, and the tree blooms with each returning spring ; for the seed is the word of God, and the Church is the gardener, and the Sun of Justice is always shining in the heavens ; the petty vexations of earth pass away, but the word of Christ shall not pass away. It is said that never before was this priceless institution in such danger of destruction as at present, that the enlightened intellect of this century will sweep away in time all seminaries of education save those that favour its own notions of expansion and development ; and we have already, in some continental countries, many too striking evidences of this demolition at the hands, forsooth, of " Liberalism." And weak minds are shaken by the spectacle, and passionate youth delights in the prospect of unbridled license ; the old Christian morality is regarded by these modern sages as effete, and the old fabric is expected to totter at length, and make way for the Everlasting Temple to be dedicated to Freedom of Thought ! Alas ! for short-sighted man. There was a time when, by the swoop of the barbarians into Europe, the proudest monuments of genius and civilization were swept away ; when the most glorious works of art were demolished, and

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the lamp of science was extinguished ; when throne subverted and laws set aside, and the human mind torpid in a slough of ignorance and barbarism. while, however, the Gospel-light, enkindled in Palestine, at first feeble and tremulous, kept on increasing in strength and brightness, until suddenly Europe started from her slumbers, and beheld around her chaos reformed into shape ; society once more fashioned and regulated ; science and art more triumphant than ever ; and the luminous lamp, not of Truth's reflection, but of Truth itself, gleaming over all, in the hands of the Christian Church. Should this universal convulsion of the human mind, so much apprehended at the present day, ever again take place, may we not justly hope that the same Church will come once more to the rescue, that she will save man from himself and his demoralizing passions, and convince him at last, by his own sad experience, that under her guidance alone he can find the just order of things, the true happiness he seeks. Physical nature would collapse without some principle of harmonious motion ; so, woe to human society, that system of perpetual unrest, if there was not within it a fixed and stern principle to guide it in its mysterious course. That principle is the word of God, imperishable, where all around crumbles into ruin. Yes. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word," says Christ, "shall not pass away." You, my brethren, thank God, are not infected with this modern intellectual mania ; you are Christians to the heart's core ; you love your God, and you obey his Church. Feed, then, the Lamp of Truth. Sustain the Christian Brothers in their noble work. "Instruct others unto justice," and may heaven grant you hereafter to shine like stars in the firmament for all eternity.

SERMON

IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF THE MERCY HOSPITAL.¹

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”—MATT. v. 5, 7.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—To suffer is the lot of man since his fall. From this terrible destiny no human being is exempt. Monarchs have suffered tortures, of which they would have given their kingdoms to purchase a moment's alleviation: the wisest and the most simple, the wealthiest and the most humble, the holiest and the most sinful are victims in their turn. Diseases and afflictions of every variety in kind and every degree of intensity in painfulness float, as it were, through the air, and infect where they will, or rather, whom the great God wills. His friends he spares no more than his enemies; nay, they are the least exempt from the common infliction, for “whom God loveth,” the Apostle assures us, “he chastiseth.” From suffering, therefore, there is no escape. But let us not imagine that God takes pleasure in seeing man suffer. Nay, to speak humanly, it must pain his tender and loving heart to inflict the slightest torture on the most insignificant sentient being of his creation; else, why did he create an aversion to cruelty and a sympathy with suffering in our bosoms? But in his all-wise counsels, sufferings are the most salutary medicine for fallen man; since, by bearing them patiently, as a retribution for his sins, he may cancel the debt he has incurred against God, and merit eternal happiness hereafter. “Blessed are they that mourn,” that is, according to religion, with patience and resignation, “for they shall be comforted;” I would have you, therefore, to bear in mind that he who teaches man the proper use and end of suffer-

¹ Preached in the Cathedral, Cork, April 23, 1865.

ing, confers on him an advantage, to which few others, if indeed any other, can be at all compared.

Again, there is an instinct in our nature, as well as a precept in our religion, that "we should do unto one another as we would wish others to do unto us." If in a stormy sea, after the vessel has been wrecked, the crew are tossed about in a boat, or on a raft, each man becomes interested, not only in his own safety, but in that of his fellow-voyagers, the community of danger levels all distinctions of rank, and begets a reciprocity of compassion, a desire for the general safety; and there are instances where a too zealous endeavour to rescue one individual has cost the lives of all. Thus in the sea of life, on which we are all tossed about by the billows of adversity, and equally exposed to destruction, it is but natural that we should manifest towards each other a feeling of mutual tenderness and sympathetic interest; not only a desire to promote the general good of all mankind, but a solicitude for the life and safety of the humblest and most abject cast-away that participates in the general misfortune. This, I say, is an instinct, but it is also a precept; an instinct almost forgotten in pagan times; a precept often ignored amongst a Christian people. Hence does our blessed Saviour exalt the character of this natural sympathy, and stimulate to its exercise by the promise of an eternal reward. "Blessed," he says, "are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

I thus discover two grand principles: first, that he confers an inestimable blessing on man, who teaches him the proper use and end of suffering; and, secondly, that we are commanded by God, as well as impelled by nature, to show mercy to our fellow-man, and to alleviate, as far as possible, his misfortune, regardless of rank, condition, or religion. These two principles, I hold, are most admirably illustrated in hospitals for the sick, under the charge of women of religious orders; and, for the further elucidation of this question, I shall dwell on it at large, in order to elicit your sympathy and secure your support for such an institution in this city, the advocacy of whose cause has been confided to my hands.

And, first of all, I deem it necessary to present you a review of the origin of hospitals in general, that you may

be enabled to form a just estimate of their nature and character.

Secondly—I shall demonstrate to you the admirable results, for the attainment of which, what I will call conventual hospitals, are calculated; and,

Thirdly—I shall draw your attention to the special claims which the Mercy Hospital in this city has upon your sympathy and support.

My brethren, hospitals for the cure of the sick are an institution peculiar to Christianity; they are amongst the blessings that flow from that genial spirit of public beneficence which was unknown in the world until Christ appeared. Before his coming, amongst pagan nations no public institution ever existed as a refuge for the victim of any human ill. Orphaned youth, blasted manhood, and decrepit age pined away unheeded. The lives of individual men were trifles in the estimation of the statesmen and philosophers of those days. The individual man was nothing; society was all. They did not know, or they could not comprehend the dignity of man—of his immortal soul, and his eternal destiny—of his origin and end they either knew nothing, or cared nothing. The prosperity of the state, the success of arms, the extension of conquest, the glory of the nation, were the paramount objects of their labours and their zeal. If men became mutilated or diseased, or unfit for labour, it was regarded more as a fault than a misfortune; they had no right to live as long as they were useless to the state. So widespread, deeply-rooted, was this political faith, so annihilated was the individual man, that he came gradually to regard himself as a cypher in the state, and to esteem his life of no value, unless it was spent or sacrificed in the cause of country.

It is incredible to what an extent this recklessness of individual life was carried, in pagan countries, before the coming of Christ. The greatest people the world ever saw were the Romans, and how did they regard the abstract man? To them, all the rest of the world were barbarians; no human being was entitled to life, liberty, or any civil rights, unless he was a Roman citizen. To every one, except themselves, they claimed the right of being oppressive, as fancy or caprice might suggest. They sub-

jected nations, far and near, to all the horrors of indiscriminate carnage, without plea or provocation. Their prisoners of war they massacred without mercy. Captive kings and queens, and their unhappy children, were led in triumphal procession through the streets of Rome, a mockery and a show to a rabid mob, and then slaughtered, like dogs, in the Capitol. Masters had full power and control over the lives of their slaves, whom they could stone, torture, or crucify, as the passion of the moment might dictate. On festival days, hundreds, and often thousands, of gladiators, prisoners of war, were brought forth in the arena, and compelled to slay each other, for the amusement of the people. The father might stifle his new-born infant in the cradle, if he wished to avoid the trouble of supporting it, and thousands availed themselves of this most atrocious privilege to murder. Not to be a Roman citizen, was—not to be a man.

In Greece, which ranked second, if not first, amongst the civilized nations of antiquity, atrocities were perpetrated no less barbarous than those of Rome. Every novice in history knows how, amongst the Spartans, deformed children were cast into a ditch, and left to perish: and how, when parents grew old and infirm, and no longer able to advance the interests of the state, they were put to death by their children, not only without a tear of sympathy, but with all the fortitude and resolution that a sense of duty inspires. It would be alike harrowing to the feelings, as it would be tedious and disgusting, to dwell at length on the horrible shapes which cruelty and inhumanity assumed in those ages of boasted civilization; and, what is more painful still to contemplate is, that those abominable practices, so far from being regarded as excesses, were respected as customs, and were applauded by the civil authorities, amongst whom ranked many whose piety has been eulogised, and whose philanthropy has been extolled by the orators and writers of their day. In short, those barbarous customs were not only sanctioned by legislation, they were approved of by philosophy, nay, consecrated by religion. The idols, the gods—let us rather say the devils of pagan worship—cried aloud for human sacrifices; the oracles enjoined the commission of murder; the temples were strewed with human gore. The philosophers of the age classified and systematized these modes of polity and

worship, and put them forward as the grand elements of government and morality. There was a sect of philosophers who taught that true fortitude consisted in beholding the worst forms of human suffering without the least emotion of pity. Such was the doctrine of the Stoics. That noble feeling of the soul, forgiveness of injuries, was utterly unknown; it was manly to revenge, it was puerile to forgive. If such were the maxims of religion and morality—if such were the atrocious doctrines and practices of the two greatest and proudest states of antiquity, where alone philosophy, religion, statesmanship, learning, and civilization claimed an existence, to what depths of degradation must the other nations of the earth have descended! what cruelties must they have practised! how little compassion for human misery must have existed among them! how little must they have known of the dignity of man, made to the image of God, and destined for the enjoyment of him in a kingdom of everlasting glory! How exactly did the inspired Zachariah conceive the sepulchral gloom and misery of fallen humanity, festering in the corruption of moral and spiritual degradation, when he depicted the nations of the earth as “sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death.” But at length a new light breaks over this chaos of corruption, “the Orient from on high hath visited his people;” the great and only true philosopher appears. Jesus, the Messiah, is come. Hear the first words of his sermon on the mountain. What are they? Does *he* extol the greatness and glory of a chosen people in comparison to whom all the world are barbarians? Does he laud the power of intellect, the prowess of arms, the splendour of renown? Are the great, and the wealthy, and the mighty of the earth the subject of his panegyric? Ah, no. What, then? “Tolle, lege”—take and read. “And seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain, and when he was set down his disciples came to him, and opening his mouth he taught them, saying: Blessed are the meek, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the merciful!” These simple words have changed the whole character of the human mind, they have averted innumerable woes from the human race, they have altered the destinies of all mankind! Christ, our Saviour, lifts man from the dark depth where he had lain for ages, and teaches him to look up to heaven, his home. He tells the humblest, the poorest, the most

degraded wretch that he is heir to an eternal kingdom ; that he is endowed with an immortal soul susceptible of happiness beyond his powers of conception ; that he is as high and as noble in the sight of God, in reality, as the proudest monarch that ever filled a throne ; that their bodies are both made out of the same clay into which they must be resolved alike ; that he has a free will, and should be the slave of no man ; that there is no distinction of races or nationalities recognized by God, for that all are brothers, and have in him a common father, and may, by their own individual exertions, attain an eternity of happiness in the world beyond the grave. Thus the barriers are broken down that separated man from man, the rich from the poor, the Jew from the Gentile, the Greek from the barbarian, the philosopher from the clown, the master from the slave ; a change comes over the whole face of the world ; all men, so to speak, shake hands together in a spirit of universal brotherhood ; manners are softened, the laws are purified from their atrocities ; wherever the light of the gospel sheds its genial ray, human sacrifices, in temple or amphitheatre, disappear ; the affectionate father recoils with horror from the once legitimate tragedy of child murder ; slavery vanishes like a dream ; it is supplanted by an obedience founded on principle, which, without binding the person or the will, fulfils all the desired ends of servitude ; the deformed child is taken to its mother's bosom, and fondled the more tenderly *because* it has been afflicted by God ; the sick and maimed are nursed and caressed with all the affection of brotherhood, and the sympathetic Christian welcomes back with smiles of joy even the life of the suffering infidel whom death had just demanded for his own. These are the results, the blessed results of thy teaching, O sweet spirit of Charity, which announces to man that, wherever he meets a fellow-man—no matter in what region of the earth, no matter of what clime, country, or creed, no matter of what condition, rank, disposition, or habits—he meets a brother made by the same God, redeemed by the same Saviour, destined for the same glory. “These things I commend to you,” says Christ, “that you love one another.” Of this levelling principle of charity we have a striking instance in the history of St. Paul. His life was a type of the two orders of things. Previous to his conversion he was an ardent

enthusiast of the sect of Pharisees; he regarded none as friends, except those of his own party or tribe; he furiously persecuted all who refused to follow the traditions of his fathers. But hear him after he has been overturned on the road to Damascus; he no sooner becomes a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, than his heart is suddenly enlarged. "There is no longer," he says, "any distinction of Jew or Gentile, of circumcised or uncircumcised, of Greek or barbarian, of Scythian, or bondman, or free, but Jesus Christ, who is all in all." And the once implacable Saul of Tarsus is ready to endure every privation, even that of life, for the salvation of the humblest of his fellow-creatures. In the cause of fraternal love, he was, to use his own words, "thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice he suffered shipwreck, a night and a day he was in the depths of the sea, in journeying often, in various perils, in labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

If such was not the language, such at least were the sentiments, not only of St. Paul, but of all the other apostles. They braved every peril, they vanquished every difficulty, to shed the humanizing influence of a divine religion over the darkened and besotted minds of men. They cured the sick, they cast out devils, they taught man the grandeur of his being, the nobility of his soul, the beauty of virtue, and its glorious rewards. And not content, like the sages of the Forum and the Areopagus, with inculcating declamatory inert maxims of virtue, the apostles and their successors were eminently practical in their relations to mankind. For such is true charity always; she does not confine herself to barren words, to vague abstractions, to unsubstantial theories; she does indulge in sublime speculations, but condescends at the same time to the simplest offices of practical beneficence. Her eyes are fixed on heaven, but she never forgets that she has to deal with weak, mortal men upon earth, whose sorrows it is hers to assuage, and whose wants it is hers to supply. With one hand, it points out to them the goal of a glorious eternity, whither she loves to conduct them; with the other, she succours their misfortunes, soothes their pains, and brushes the tears from their weeping eyes. She cares not to proclaim her love for her neighbour, unless she manifests that love by giving him bread when he is hungry,



by clothing him when naked, by visiting him when sick and in prison, by rescuing him from poverty, misery, and death. Hence, slowly, noiselessly she carries out her ends, she realizes her ideas by means of vast, beneficent, fruitful institutions, which spring up like magic in every Christian land, putting human philosophy to the blush, the trifling results of whose teaching are pitifully incommensurate with the pompous ostentation of its promises. Charity speaks little, but works a great deal, as becomes the daughter of him who, though rapt in the silent contemplation of his own ineffable beauty and glory, has yet created this world for our joy and our wonder, and who in the vast designs ordained by him for regulating the motions of the universe, overlooks not the lily of the field which he has robed beyond the glory of Solomon, and extends his protecting hand to the most indiscernible animalcule that floats, as through an ocean, in the smallest drop of water perceptible to the eye.

Of this all-embracing, all-pervading charity, Jesus himself is the type; his whole life is the example; *He* is not content with preaching sublime maxims of philosophy; *He* deals not in barren platitudes of philanthropy. No. Take up the gospel once more and read. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Is it not natural to ask, how does Christ illustrate his teaching? What is his practice? Would we not expect that, immediately after his sermon on the mount, he would proceed to put his maxims into execution? In this expectation we are not disappointed. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had fully ended these words, the people were in admiration at his doctrine. And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him; and, behold, a leper came and adored him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed." Then he heals the centurion's son. "And when evening was come they brought to him many who were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with his word, and all that were sick he healed, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying: He took our infirmities and bore our diseases." The whole three years of his public life were spent in succouring the infirmities

of men ; his whole conduct was a succession of miraculous cures, wrought in favour of the sick and infirm. He fed the poor, he restored sight to the blind, he made the paralytic whole, he cast out devils, he cleansed the leper, he brought back the dead to life. As the inspired writer summarizes his conduct, "He went about doing good." "He went about all Galilee," says St. Matthew, "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom ; and healing all manner of sickness, and every infirmity among the people ;" or, to convey in still more forcible language, an idea of the healing ægis, as it were, in which he was enveloped, the sacred word assures us that "a power went out from him, and healed all."

And all this he did, not to promote the glory of Judea above all the nations of the earth ; not to advance any vague general result, but to bring health and happiness to every individual that begged for relief ; to the sinner and the saint—to the Jew and the Gentile. He did not ignore the rights of individual men, nor postpone them to the interests of the state ; the humblest member of the human family was the tenderest object of his solicitude ; nay, the more abject and abandoned he was, the more was he beloved by his Saviour. Know you not how tenderly he has consigned to our regard the poorest of our brethren ? "As often as you have done it to one of these my least brethren, ye have done it unto *Me*." A cup of cold water, given to the poor in his name, shall receive an eternal reward. And when he shall come in the last dread day, to judge mankind, and mete out the rewards and punishments we shall have deserved, to what course of conduct will he award the remuneration of eternal life ? Is it to the warriors and statesmen and philosophers, who, by the success of arms, by the wisdom of legislation, by the preaching of philanthropic maxims, have raised, or striven to raise, their countries or their peoples to opulence, glory, and fame ? Ah, no ! How then ? "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world ; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me, sick and in prison and you visited me. Then shall the just answer him saying, Lord, when did we see thee hungry and fed thee, thirsty and gave thee to drink ; and when did we see

thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and covered thee? And the King answering shall say to them, Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you have done it unto me."

Here was the sublime philosophy that changed the whole face of the world. Our blessed Lord passed away, but his spouse, the Church, was the faithful repository of his maxims—the faithful executrix of his will and testament. The poor, who had been hitherto neglected, the sick and infirm, who had been spurned and despised, the widows and orphans, who had been the victims of inhuman disregard, the aged, who were left to perish, all became, not only the tenderest objects of her maternal solicitude, but the claimants of her respect and veneration. She it was who made the kings and princes of the earth stoop to wash the feet of the poor. She has ever been a nurse and a mother to them. Out of the vast treasures which had been, in early times, poured into her lap by the great ones of the earth, she erected hospitals for their relief, while she created religious orders to preside over these institutions, whose duty it was to impart to the recipients of her charity the sweetness of consolation in their sorrows and afflictions; and at the present day, no matter from what region of the earth the cry of distress is raised, the maternal Church hears with grief the lamentations of her children; she issues forth from her sanctuary a missive of consolation, and, notwithstanding her own poverty, sends a munificent contribution to their relief.

For our purpose, it is sufficient to know that the idea of hospitals for the poor and the sick—institutions utterly unknown among pagans—originated with the holy Catholic Church, and that they are the precious results that flow from the spirit of universal benevolence introduced into the world by Christ himself, to whom the victim of sorrow or disease never appealed in vain.

As soon as the Church was enabled to work with freedom—as soon as the early spirit of persecution had been quenched—we find the erection of hospitals one of the most desired objects of her heart. The first hospital of which history informs us was founded at Cesarea, in the fourth century; in the ninth century there were twenty-four hospitals in Rome alone. In the middle ages, every monastery and college of canons had an hospital attached,

not only for the reception of pilgrims, but for the cure of the sick and the succour of the poor. For the regulation of these institutions laws were established, to which the strictest adherence was enjoined. They were placed under the direct charge of the bishops, whose jurisdiction was recognised and sanctioned by the civil power. The property of the hospitals was made Church property, by which wise regulation it was made inviolable, a character very desirable for property at a period of outrages and usurpations. Thus, the property of the poor became the property of the Church; while, on the other hand, the property of the Church became the property of the poor. The political state of Europe has changed since then, but the hospitals not only still remain, but they flourish in more than all their pristine vigour; and wherever the world-wide traveller may rest from his wanderings, wherever he discovers a trace of Christianity, there he is also sure to find a refuge for the sick poor, for the most part under the care of the members of a religious order, where every want is supplied, every craving of nature gratified—health, and life, and happiness diffused around.

II. I undertook to show you that in hospitals under the care of religious orders, the two grand objects are best carried out, which I laid down as the fundamental grounds of their existence, namely, the alleviation of suffering, and the teaching of the religious use and end of human afflictions. For the promotion of this double object the Church has confided hospitals to the care of religious women. That women should have charge of the sick is most natural; the nature of woman is softer than that of man, it is more sympathetic with human misery, more delicate in its attentions, more cunning in its devices of consolation, more enduring of fatigue at the bedside, in a word more nurse-like. Woman is also more religious than man, at least she is more keenly susceptible of religious influences, and more careful than man to enkindle religious emotions in the minds of others. Her exhortations and entreaties sink more deeply into the soul. She makes allowance for human weakness; she may be shocked by the candid confessions of a sinner, but this feeling only stimulates her to infuse greater encouragement; she depicts the mercies of God, and upbraids the sinner with his ingratitude to the tenderest of fathers, until the victim

of sin finds his heart melting beneath the warmth of her words, and penitent tears suffuse his eyes to which tears had long been a stranger. These happy influences of women on suffering humanity are all found concentrated in conventual hospitals, and nowhere else can be discerned in full vigour. Women who attend the sick for pay, have no real interest in the object of their attentions, they work by rule and for a selfish end. The death or recovery or eternal fate of the patient is a trifling matter to them, if they are paid their stipulated fee. Philanthropic ladies may volunteer their services as nurses, in cases of great emergency. I do not wish to detract from their merits, but they are well paid by the applause of a grateful country, and take their niche in the temple of fame—no small ambition for the vanity of woman. Public hospitals erected by public beneficence, or by civil exactions, doubtless, work as well as anything merely human can work. All that human skill can devise, all that human benevolence can suggest for the alleviation of suffering, is carefully carried out according to all the rules of science and all the ingenuity of art. But what human supervision can inspect every portion of such various and delicate machinery? Who can guarantee that hired nurses, to whom their profession is a routine and nothing more, and who see in the patients only subjects illustrating the varieties of disease, mere bodies requiring certain treatment, certain manipulation, will always carry out the instructions of the physician, or the dictates of their own experience? In such institutions the administration may be perfectly prescribed, but it shall be found in the working to be harsh and stiff. It requires the ingredient of Christian charity, which, like a healing balsam, pervades every winding of the machine, and makes it work with ease and smoothness. Talk as you will of public hospitals for the poor, where Christian charity is wanting, the patients are rather objects of pity than congratulation. The reports of such institutions may read well before the public, but philanthropy ever exaggerates its own works. The love of our brethren, if not founded on a religious motive, is as fruitful in words as it is barren in deeds. It is not in human nature, unaided by grace, to bear for any long time the sight of the poor and the sick and the aged. How can we expect that a vague feeling of humanity will enable us to encounter

the constant care required to console those unhappy beings! No; the only motive that can ensure success in this difficult undertaking—the only motive which power cannot enforce, and which money cannot buy is love. You ask, then, do I not believe in philanthropy? No. “Philanthropy,” says a great French writer (Chateaubriand), “is only the false coin of charity.” Was it not, then, right that the Church should have at all times a directing influence over all branches of public beneficence, since she knows so well how to make Christian charity active, by applying it to all kinds of human miseries? Her enemies may denounce this interference as monopoly, usurpation, grasping ambition; but who will grudge her an ambition which has only for its object the unselfish, the noble, the sublime end of succouring the poor and consoling the unfortunate?

Actuated by this noble ambition, the Church consigns hospitals to the care of religious women, and the worst enemies of our religion will not deny that the results of such consignment are admirable beyond all conception. Ladies offer themselves from every respectable class of society—ladies of fortune, education, and elegant manners, they form themselves into a society for the care of the sick—they have no worldly object to attain—no vulgar ambition to gratify, they sacrifice wealth, position, property, they reject their very names, they quit all that woman holds dear in the world for the attainment of this, the one darling object of their hearts’ affection. They seek not the applause of men, their whole desire is that they may live and die unknown. They work for God, and for God alone. For him they are prepared to endure all that human nature can bear, for him they are ready at any moment to lay down their very lives. Charity, then, is the invigorating principle of their whole conduct—love for God, love for God’s poor. In the prostrate victims of disease they see only the image of their suffering Saviour. They never weary of their toil, like the hireling guardians of the sick; they watch every quiver of the lip, every flutter of the heart, every twitching of the eye; their words of consolation, like summer showers on the baked earth, glide through every fibre of the victim’s heart, until he melts in the sweetest tears of joy. Is he far from his tender mother, his gentle sister? is he a stranger in the

land? Is he ignorant of his nurse's language? It matters not. No mother could bind his wounds so tenderly, no sister could so sweetly assuage his raging pangs. No woman of his own land could shed, in native words, such balm of consolation over his soul, as she does in a language that speaks with silent eloquence from every feature of her face! And mark, how in the impatience of his suffering she turns to him and teaches him that suffering is the lot of man, that by bearing his sufferings with patience, he may blot out his manifold sins, and be happy for ever with his God. She speaks of his suffering Saviour—she paints the agony in the garden, the scourging at the pillar, the death-scene on Calvary, and shows how all these woes were endured for him. Will he not suffer a little in return for such boundless love? Oh! my brethren, to strangers it may be well to depict the Sister of Mercy at the bed-side of suffering humanity, to you it is superfluous labour. Surely no beings ever lightened more the sorrows of the sick or saved so many dying souls, as those human angels to whom God "hath given the poor in charge to keep them in all their ways."

III. To come to the third and last point of my subject, I shall briefly show you the peculiar claims which the Mercy Hospital in this city has upon your sympathy and support. It was founded in the year 1857, and since that time, that is, during a period of eight years, it has received over three thousand patients, of whom an enormous majority have been restored to perfect health, and a very trifling minority have died; very many have been relieved and have subsequently recovered altogether, while the least number have left the hospital without the hope of recovery. The number of deaths, though comparatively small, would not be at all so large, but that the Sisters refuse admission to no applicant as long as a vacancy offers for his reception, their object being not so much to alleviate suffering as to carry out the other end I alluded to, namely, to afford the patient an opportunity of bearing his sufferings in a Christian spirit, and purchasing by patience a crown of everlasting glory. They therefore receive many who are beyond the reach of medical aid—many at the very point of death, whose passage to eternity is smoothed by their tender care, and by the unceasing ministrations of a pious and zealous chaplain. The quality

of the patients admitted to the hospital ranges over a very large class of the poor, embracing house-keepers, clerks, artisans, labourers, servants, workmen, pensioners, children, and orphans. From this classification it will be seen that the main object for which the Mercy Hospital was established has been amply attained; that object being conveyed in the first Annual Report, which says, "Without interference with the other public charitable institutions, this large number of persons, whose position in life is above that of the workhouse pauper, and many of whom would rather endure any amount of privation and suffering than enter the union hospital, and some even, whom no inducement could draw to the public infirmaries, have been restored to health and usefulness."

One other point, and the last to which I invite your attention, is what I shall call the good-Samaritan character of this institution. When the good Samaritan encountered the man beaten by robbers and left half dead on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, he did not stop to inquire into any details of the sufferer's history, into his character, country, or creed, but, "seeing him," says the sacred Scripture, "he was moved with compassion, and going up to him, he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." Now, this victim of robbers was a Jew, a declared enemy to the religion of the Samaritan, but on the latter this consideration had, and would have, no effect; it was sufficient for him that the sufferer was in extreme distress. Glorious, uninquiring spirit of Christian charity! And, my brethren, the parable was propounded by our blessed Saviour himself, to whose voice the Sister of Mercy is joyfully obedient—that voice which says to her, "Go and do thou likewise." Notwithstanding her solicitude for the spiritual welfare of her Catholic patients; she never closes the door, but rather the more joyfully opens it to the stranger to her creed, not that she may resort, under the cover of her charity, to the meanness of proselytism—thank God! no one has ever upbraided her with this charge—but that she may be to him a good Samaritan; that she may bind up his wounds, and pour in the oil of consolation and the wine of encouragement: nay, she summons the minister of his own religion, who visits him at any hour, and has afforded him every facility for supplying the spiritual wants of the patient; for, to use the

Sisters' own words, "they abhor from their hearts that pseudo-charity which would force on an agonized soul a battle with conscience." Thus, nothing is wanting to elevate the Mercy Hospital to the highest character of efficiency for securing the temporal and spiritual wants of all those who may be confided to its care.

To the support of this institution—for on your charity depends its existence—you are this day called on to contribute; and see, my brethren, what powerful motives impel you to this exercise of charity. If you wish to uphold the dignity of manhood—if you would manifest the superiority of reason and religion above the brutal instincts of uneducated, or mistaught, man—if you would proclaim the glory of Christianity, above the infamy of paganism—if you respect the teachings of Christ, and wish to imitate his example—if you venerate the traditions of the Church, and would second her still unflinching efforts in the cause of suffering humanity—if you approve of the generous and noble sacrifices made by the Sisters of Mercy in that sacred cause—if you would restore joy to the children of sorrow, health to the victims of disease, and eternal life to many who should otherwise be lost for ever—if you would restore the convalescent father to a family half-famishing in his absence—the brave son to his mother, and the fair daughter to the household, where she becomes once more so bright an ornament—if you would rescue thousands from the stigma of pauperism, and send them back, without a blemish on their self-respect, to the arena where honest labour meets its just reward: in fine, if you would purchase for yourselves the prayers of the poor, the intercession in heaven of those whom your charity has sent there before you—if you would meet hereafter, before the throne of God, the million champions of charity whom the Church has sent forth, through the ages of the past, who have fought the good fight, and who have won the crown of glory, be generous to-day in this most glorious cause—uphold your well-earned and well-sustained character for charitable munificence—for your name is gone forth among the nations of the earth, as a name associated with all that is generous in manhood and noble in religion. I will not seek to stimulate your charity by reminding you that it is a duty. I will only end as I began, by taking you to the foot of the mountain, where Jesus stands before

the men of all generations ; and, as I began with the beginning of this discourse, I shall conclude with the end, "Every one that heareth my words, and doeth them, shall be likened to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock, and the rain fell, and the floods came, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, because it was founded on a rock. And every one that heareth those words, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, that built his house upon the sand, and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof." I leave my cause in your hands, begging of him to reward you who has said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

SERMON.

PANEGYRIC OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.¹

“The hope of the wicked is as dust which is blown away with the wind, and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storms : and a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind, and as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passeth by. But the just shall live for evermore, and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory, and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord, for with his right hand he will cover them, and with his holy arm he will defend them.”—WISDOM, v. 15, 16, 17.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—It is the nature of all earthly things to fade and pass away. Man's life on earth is compared in the Sacred Scriptures to a breath, to a shadow, to a flower, to every type of evanescence, to every emblem of decay. So is it also with the material works of men—the grandest and most enduring monuments of their genius and their power yield to the slow but irresistible inroads of time. Cities vanish from the earth and leave no trace behind them. Sodom and Gomorrah have long since perished : Babylon and Nineveh are no more : Troy and Carthage exist only in the dreams of poets. Majestic and defiant of decay as the pyramids appear upon the plains of Egypt, should the world last so long, their time will also come ; and as the drop wears the stone, so shall those marvellous monuments of human power crumble into their native dust, and the puzzled traveller seek in vain for the spot from whence they towered to the skies. Kings with their kingdoms flourish for a while and melt into oblivion—the glories of Greece, the splendour of Persia, the might and majesty of Egypt, the imperial magnificence of Rome—what vestige of their greatness now remains upon the earth ? The Cæsars and

¹ Preached in the Church of St. Francis, Cork, October 9, 1864.

Alexanders of antiquity only amuse the imagination of boyhood, or point a moral to the gravity of age. But victorious over time, and imperishable as the soul of man, live the works and shine the memories of the saints of God. Yielding to the laws of nature, which influence all earthly things, their bodies commingle with the dust—they are seen and heard no more; like the shadow, the breath, and the flower, they fade and pass away. But their works, into which God has breathed an enduring vitality, live after them—they are “like to trees (to use the figure of the Psalmist) planted near running waters which shall bring forth fruit in due season.” Royal dynasties, ramified through a hundred degrees of consanguinity, fade away and are forgotten, but the spiritual children of the saints, begot to them by grace, increase and multiply upon the earth, and constitute an eternal dynasty of saintship—“the seed of the just man shall be mighty upon earth, the generations of the righteous shall be blessed.” The empires of this world become impoverished and effete—they dwindle and decay, but the imperial majesty of the saints is crowned with everlasting glory, and flourishes with unfading beauty. “Glory and wealth shall be in his house,” saith the Psalmist of the saint, “and his justice remaineth for ever.” Who shall say that the kingdoms of Augustine, Benedict, Dominic, or Ignatius are extinguished after the lapse of ages? They reign in heaven, but their successors wield on earth their peaceful sceptres. From century to century those blessed spirits chaunt before the throne of God his eternal praises, but their spiritual children upon earth look up to them, pray to them, venerate them; they imitate their virtues—they obey their maxims, they live their lives over again—they perpetuate from generation to generation the selfsame song of homage and adoration to the Most High. All things change, but the fire of divine love kindled by the saints ever burns with a constant flame; the stars from heaven look down from age to age upon the earth, and while the works of mere men appear and disappear before them, they ever behold the unchanging hills and the selfsame ocean; so the starlike eyes of the saints gazing from above see monarchs and their people perishing from the earth; but the children of their respective orders practising the illustrious virtues which they taught, and emulating the heroism of which they set

so glorious an example, they behold after the lapse of centuries flourishing and shining amongst men, giving glory to God, and sounding his eternal praises from every region of the universal world.

Illustrious amongst the saints of God whose heroic virtues are recorded, and the diffusion of whose spiritual sway is commemorated in the history of mankind, stands St. Francis of Assisium, whose memory we are this night assembled to venerate in this church, dedicated to his honour. One of the most abject of men, utterly destitute of all the goods of this world, leading a life of privacy and solitude, by no means remarkable for the possession of worldly wisdom, this great saint has conferred more real benefit on the human race than all the kings that ever ruled the earth. The influence of his teaching and example has spread itself all over the world, and every race of humanity has contributed its quota of children to his spiritual rule. From the obscure recesses of the Franciscan Convent men have sprung to the highest honours enjoyed upon earth, to the purple of the Cardinalate, and the tiara of the Papacy: the great and the powerful of this world, on the other hand, have cast aside the trappings of their greatness, and joyfully assumed the cowl of the Capuchin or the girdle of the Cordelier. The institute of Poor Clares established by the saint has afforded to the devout female sex a means of practising his virtues and obtaining his protection; and many a noble lady has exchanged her hereditary halls for the solitary cell of the Franciscan institute, and turned her back upon the vanities of the world, that she might serve the Lord as St. Francis served him. Such was the heroic sanctity of the Saint, and so did his sanctity fructify, that at this moment, after the lapse of seven hundred years, throughout the world there exist tens of thousands of convents, churches, and monasteries, erected under his patronage, and hundreds of thousands of pious men and women of his order who illumine the Church by their piety and learning, and propitiate the wrath of God, excited by the impieties and infidelities of mankind. Such was the glory of this great saint, before the lustre of whose fame the tinsel celebrity of warriors, statesmen, philosophers, and philanthropists, is paled, as are the stars by the noonday sun.

But let me briefly sketch for you the life of this great

Christian hero, that you may know what man is capable of doing if influenced by a love for God, and that you may be induced by the divine grace to imitate, even at a distance, his illustrious virtues, if you would hereafter share his eternal glory.

Saint Francis, the son of Bernardon, a rich merchant, was born in the year 1182, at Assisi, a village of *Umbria*, in Italy. The birth of so great a man was deemed worthy of divine interposition; and accordingly one day, a stranger attired as a pilgrim announced to his mother that the child would be born as our Blessed Saviour was, in a stable, and on straw. The mother, in obedience to the warning voice, when her hour was come, retired to a stable, and verified the prediction of the stranger. A church dedicated to St. Francis now stands on the very spot where that stable stood. His father being in France at the time, the Saint was baptised and called John, at the request of his mother. The child grew up in purity and innocence under the care of pious ecclesiastics; and when he arrived at the age of mature boyhood was received by his father as partner in his mercantile pursuits. As it was necessary for the boy to learn the French language, their dealings being mostly with French people, he did learn it with such extraordinary facility that he was called Francis by his father, which name he retained to the day of his death. For many years the early life of Francis was by no means remarkable for piety. On the contrary, without being absolutely wild or vicious, he was worldly fond of pleasure, and good-natured even to extravagance. His hand was ever open to assist a needy boon-companion, or to succour the poor and distressed who flocked about him in the streets. Such was the benevolence of his nature, that he could never refuse a request. One day, being rather busy about his affairs, a poor man solicited him for alms in the name of God, but the Saint abruptly dismissed him without heeding his request; suddenly, however, recollecting himself, he ran after the unhappy postulant, gave him a generous donation, and on returning vowed before God that he would never again refuse any alms, especially when solicited in his Holy name. Actuated by this lively sense of sympathy for the poor, as he was one day riding in the neighbourhood of Assisium, richly dressed, he encountered a gentleman once affluent, but now clothed in miserable rags. The Saint,

moved with compassion, alighted from his horse and exchanged his own clothes for the rags of the outcast. Such a splendid instance of true charity God would not overlook, and accordingly, that night, the Saint was deemed worthy of beholding a vision of a most extraordinary character. He thought he saw a magnificent palace, filled with rich arms, all marked with the sign of the cross, and that he heard some one say that these arms belonged to him and his soldiers, and that he should go at once and fight the battles of the Lord. From this vision he gathered that he was called by God to take up spiritual arms—the arms of every virtue—that he should summon his followers around him, and that going forth, all marked with the sign of the cross, under that sacred banner they should do battle with God's enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil, and thus give glory to their Eternal King.

From this moment his benevolent disposition to the poor became more and more remarkable, and his donations in the sacred cause of charity well-nigh exceeded the moderate means at his disposal. He loved the poor with an ardent love; and the more abject and wretched they were, the more clearly he saw in them the image of his divine Master. The lepers who abounded in Italy at the time were the especial objects of his affectionate care; he heeded not the loathsomeness of the disease, but embraced them as a mother might a child, for the love of Jesus Christ. But, not content with ministering to the wants of the poor and miserable, he would become poor and miserable himself. On a certain occasion, having given a very large donation for a religious purpose, his father's anger was dreadfully excited; he punished Francis with cruel severity, he beat him unmercifully, and imprisoned him in a dark dungeon. He then brought him before the Bishop of Assisium, protested against his extravagance, and insisted on his renouncing all claims to his inheritance. To this proposal the Saint joyfully acceded, he signed the paper of renunciation, and accepted the alternative of hopeless poverty. On that occasion he used those memorable words: "Hitherto I have called you father, now I can say with more confidence, Our Father, who art in heaven, in whom I place all my hope and treasure." He gave back to his offended parent the very clothes which he wore, that his renunciation of the world's goods might be

perfect, and was indebted for a wretched old cloak to the good bishop, who was filled with wonder and amazement at the contemplation of such extraordinary love for God. Behold Francis, now in the twenty-fifth year of his age, utterly destitute of all the goods of the world—without money, without clothes, without hope, except in the great God, for whose sake he made this glorious sacrifice. But the man of God goes farther still; one day he hears in the gospel of the Mass the priest read the words of Christ to his apostles: “Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff.” Filled with shame that he had not yet reached this degree of evangelical poverty, he strips the shoes from off his feet, casts aside his staff, gives his last penny to the poor, and reserves for himself only that one wretched garment which he girds with a cord round his waist, and which was the prototype of the habit worn to this day by the children of his order. Oh! what a spirit of self-sacrifice; what love for God; what heroic virtue—but yet, what more unspeakable wisdom, for the Saint remembered the words of Jesus: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” He knew that, by the rejection of all the goods which this world can bestow, he was laying up treasures for himself in heaven, to enrich his soul for all eternity. Even in this cold, bleak world, at the moment of his utter self-abnegation, what joy must have filled his holy soul? He might have cried, with the Psalmist, “My father and mother have forsaken me, but the Lord hath taken me up.” And, oh! what a taking up was that? Guided by the Father of Lights, that young man, that child of heaven, sees wonders of God’s love and beauty. What are the world’s goods to him? His God is his all; he calls on God, and God hears his prayers; he is hungry, but God feeds him with the food of his love; he is thirsty, but God inebriates his soul from the fountains of his eternal sweetness; like his divine Master, he has not where to lay his head, but sleeping beneath the broad canopy of heaven, he has God and his angels for watchers and guardians. He suffers from the coldness and inclemency of the night, but he remembers to have read of a night when his divine Lord suffered for him the agonies of a living death in the blood-stained garden of Gethsamene, and he is consoled. And

what did this humble Saint, this forlorn outcast, effect by his poverty and humiliations? Divesting himself of corruptible clothing, he put on Jesus Christ; he possessed neither gold nor silver, but all the riches of heaven seemed placed at his disposal; and, whilst he had no means, whilst he begged from door to door, he effected far more than the most splendid fortune would have enabled him to accomplish. Within two years he built three churches, and finished other more expensive undertakings. He had no house, no resting-place, and yet princesses of royal blood were proud to pour their treasures at his feet, and resign themselves to be his followers in the pathway of the Crucified. In a few years his numerous children spread themselves all over the Continent of Europe; they filled Italy, Spain, France, England, Greece, and Africa; they received a hospitable welcome on the green shores of our own native land, where they flourish in full vigour to the present day. Ten years after the order was founded, the saint assembled in a general chapter 5000 religious, who formed but a portion of his immense family. Thus, that man of God, who would have neither wife nor child according to the flesh, became the spiritual father of a countless posterity, of a whole people who bore his name, and caused it to be blessed even to our own days; of a race beloved by God, which infidelity, after all its efforts and all its power, has been unable to extinguish even at the end of 700 years, and which, springing from the ashes of those who have passed away, will surely last to the very end of time. "Behold," says Christ, "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

The three great characteristics of the Saint's life were his poverty, his humility, and his wonderful love for suffering, in imitation of his divine Redeemer. Of his poverty, we have already a good idea, but consider for a moment the wondrous depths of his humility. For the first five years of his conversion to a penitential life, he consented to be, even in his own native land, the butt and scorn of wanton youth, and an object of derision wherever he appeared. Heedless of dress, an outcast on the face of the world, a beggar by choice, he was hailed with insolent shouts of laughter, and lively sallies of ridicule; but, strange to say, this was his delight, he courted ridicule and reproach—like the apostles, he rejoiced that he was

“accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.” He remembered how the innocent Lamb of God was kicked, and buffeted, and spat upon in the hall of Caiphas for his sake, and why should he not suffer reproach for the sake of him who showed him such unspeakable love? But God exalts the humble, and the humble Francis soon reached a pinnacle of fame and veneration which he was the last to expect, and which he would have died sooner than covet. Kings and supreme Pontiffs lavished on him the choicest tokens of their favour; whole nations delighted to award him their respect and veneration—nay, even while he lived, men cast themselves at his feet and did him homage; they begged of him miracles, as men might beg for bread; they invoked his intercession with God, as if he were already enjoying the beatific vision. The wonder is how, enveloped in such an incense of praise and admiration, he still cherished, in all its bloom and loveliness, the priceless flower of humility. So humble was he, and so deeply conscious of his insignificance in the sight of God, that he could never be persuaded to accept the dignity of the priesthood, but remained a Deacon to the day of his death. Oh! fearful considerations for us, ministers of God! Francis, the worker of miracles, and the prophet, trembles at the thought of approaching the Holy of Holies; and we, alas! who mix with the world, and become tinged with its vanities and weaknesses, presume to advance without a shudder to the altar of the Lord! The ardent desire of Francis was to live and die unknown, and he was never so happy as when prostrate before the altar of his beloved church at Portiuncula, or pouring forth his sighs and groans before his God in the lonely solitude of Mount Alverno. Yet fame and admiration would pursue him, fly as he may from the eyes of men. The more he buried himself in obscurity, the more did his virtues shine before men, as diamonds and pearls are only found in the bosom of the earth, or hid in the cavernous depths of the ocean. The dead he restored to life were the heralds of his power and glory; the events he foretold proclaimed him a prophet of the Lord. He astonished the world by the knowledge he possessed of the secrets of man’s heart, by his wisdom in counsel, by his magnanimity in danger—nay, there was in his whole bearing and conduct a something superhuman, almost

divine, that excited the amazement, and exacted the homage of the universal world.

Why omit to record that glorious event in his life which took place in the barren wilds of Africa, whither his zeal for souls and longing for martyrdom bore him from his native land? While the Christians and Mussulmen waged against each other a fearful war, Francis, undismayed, flung himself into the camp of the Saracens, and was led a prisoner before the barbarian chief. When asked to account for himself, dauntlessly the humble monk gazed on the awful Sultan, whose name was terror, and whose frown was death to his friends as well as foes. "Prince," he exclaimed, "I am sent to you, not by men, but by the most high God, to preach the Gospel to you, and point out to you the way of salvation. If you doubt my power or the truth of my religion, call hither your priests, let a large fire be kindled—let them and me walk through the flames, and those flames shall reveal to you whether their religion is the true one or mine." The astounded Sultan dared not accept the challenge; but such was his admiration of the man of God, that he not only released him from his imprisonment, but loaded him with presents, which the Saint politely refused, treated him with honours which the proudest monarch would have been delighted to receive, regarded him as something more than man, and little short of a divinity, and, finally, sent him back with a safe escort to his own camp. Thus, O God! dost thou exalt the humble and confound the mighty. The barbarian monarch, whose legions bestrew the earth with the corpses of his enemies, is vanquished by a poor, humble, unarmed man, attired in the meanest garb—his native ferocity is softened to the simplicity of a child; and powerful as he is, he trembles before the superior majesty that sits enthroned in the eyes of the Saint as they beam on him from beneath the simple canopy of the cowl.

But, by far the most remarkable feature of St. Francis' life was his wonderful love of suffering, by which his character approximated more closely to that of his Divine Redeemer than did the character of any other human being that ever existed, excepting perhaps the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was by excellence the Queen of Sorrows. From the first moment of his penitential life until the day of his death, his austerities were unsurpassed, his self-denial was

unparalleled in the history of mankind. How nature sustained the ordeal through which he passed it is impossible to conceive: he fasted 320 days out of the year, and we may well suppose that during the remaining forty-five he was not over-indulgent to his appetite. These 320 days were eight Lents which he made for himself. Alas! we repine at one Lent, and often beg to be exempted from its obligations. Oh! would that we were blessed with only one spark of the fire of divine love that animated the breast of St. Francis, and then indeed we should see that all the sufferings of this life which we could possibly endure would be only a very poor offering of love to the Almighty. It is almost difficult to believe that such austerities as those St. Francis suffered were ever endured by mortal man, so intense was their acuteness, so unmitigated their severity. He chastised his body like St. Paul, and brought it under subjection. As our Saviour was scourged at the pillar, so did our holy Saint scourge his own body—so did he tear and mangle his flesh without mercy; his only clothing, as we have seen, was one rude coarse garment—his only couch the bare hard ground—with his food, which was insipid and forbidding enough, he mingled ashes to make it still more unpalatable. Consumed by thirst in midsummer, he was wont to refuse a small drink of water—he thought of our Blessed Lord's thirst on the cross, and of the vinegar and gall with which he was solicited to quench it. Whole days and nights he spent absorbed in the contemplation of our blessed Saviour's sufferings until every pang of his Redeemer's heart touched a sympathetic chord in his own. So deeply did he sympathize with our Lord in his afflictions, and so assimilated did his own sufferings become with those of his divine Master, that he merited a reward the most rare and distinguished perhaps ever vouchsafed to mortal man—I allude to the stigmas or marks of nails in his hands and feet, and the incision in his side, which were mysteriously impressed upon him one day as he was absorbed with peculiar emotion in the contemplation of our Saviour's agonies on the cross. Thus, even while he lived, this great Saint was marked with the seal of the elect; and without awaiting the day of resurrection and triumph of the Predestined, his body was transformed even here below into a glorious likeness of the Body of Jesus Christ.

But, my brethren, what perhaps is more interesting for our consideration on the present occasion is the extraordinary love which animated the breast of St. Francis towards our Divine Redeemer in the most holy and adorable sacrament of the altar. The contemplation of such tender love and such lavish beauty as are here manifested towards us by our blessed Lord filled the Saint with an excess of wonder, and cast his soul into the depths of the most profound adoration. He frequently received the body of his Lord, but always with such unction and fervour as touched the hearts and quickened the devotions of those who had the happiness to behold him. After communion, he was frequently seen rapt in an ecstasy of spiritual delight, a sweet foretaste of that eternal joy which now inebriates his soul in the kingdom of God's glory. In all his discourses he inculcated an ardent devotion to God in this most adorable Sacrament—he preached with all the vehemence of zeal and all the cogency of argument against its heretical opponents; and so far did he carry his own personal love for God, as here displayed to man, that he swept out the churches in many places with his own hands, and decorated the altars with every adornment which piety could suggest or entreaty procure. For his soul had pierced the depths of Jesus' love, as evinced in this most excellent Sacrament. His whole life was a study of the life of Jesus, of his tenderness, of his mercy, of his compassion, of his forgiveness, of his deep, his unfathomable love. In Jesus he-lived, moved, and had his being—his body walked the earth, but his soul was away with Jesus, either in the blessed courts of heaven gazing on his eternal glory and beauty, or looking back through the vista of a thousand years on the trembling babe at Bethlehem—the fond master, friend, brother, in the supper-room of Jerusalem, the prostrate weeper in the Garden of Gethsamene, or the blood-stained victim drawing his last sigh on the tragic heights of Calvary. But of all the instances of Jesus' love, that of the Blessed Eucharist absorbed him most, and cast him into the most ecstatic emotions of tenderness and joy. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? In the depths of his humility, deeming himself the most abject of men, the vilest of sinners (for we cannot doubt that the Saints, pure as they were, really felt the conviction of their own sinfulness), he could not conceive how God would come down

from his throne of glory and seek a resting-place on his bosom. Such condescension on the part of God, such unspeakable self-humiliation for his sake, filled with astonishment and moved to tears of gratitude the holy saints of God, to whom this sacrament appeared to be the grand and crowning climax of his Redeemer's love for man. This gratitude, this reciprocal love for his Saviour's love, which ever burned in the breast of Francis, became the habit of his soul, and modelled his features into a constant expression of tenderness and sweetness peculiar to the saints of God. The love of his heart beamed through his eyes, so that those who moved in his presence were enchanted by the supernatural benignity of his disposition—they felt that they moved in the immediate neighbourhood of holiness itself, and were hushed, despite themselves, into silent reverence and awe. Thus the pure soul of St. Francis was like a placid lake, over whose calm surface and through whose crystal depths shone from the bright azure of heaven the sunshine of his Redeemer's love, until not only did it become itself the bright embodiment of heat and light and beauty, but the whole atmosphere around it breathed of sweetness, serenity, and joy.

Such, my brethren, was the great St. Francis of Assisium, the brightest model of poverty, of humility, of suffering, ever set before the eyes of men by the Church of God.

Let us briefly consider what special advantages we are to reap from the contemplation of his extraordinary virtues. In considering the lives of the saints, many persons, so far from being stimulated by their example, are rather discouraged in the pursuit of virtue, and give up in despair the acquisition of an excellence which they consider impossible of attainment. This is a grievous error, and evidently suggested by the enemy of man. We are not all required to be so perfect as was St. Francis of Assisium. He received an extraordinary amount of grace from God, and he complied with it. Perhaps one out of a hundred millions of people never received so much grace as he received. God disposes his graces at his pleasure—to some he deals them munificently, to others sparingly. We all fulfil our end by faithfully complying with the graces we receive. Men like St. Francis were raised up for special

purposes, as were the apostles—we cannot all be apostles—we cannot all be hermits and anchorites. The saints of God are stars in the celestial firmament, shining like bright beacons to guide the sons of men—the banished children of Eve, to their final resting place. As star differs from star, so does saint differ from saint in glory. We are all destined by God to shine in heaven hereafter—if we cannot beam with the brightness of the heroes of Christ, the apostles, the martyrs, the confessors, the virgins, we can at least attain to some degree of brilliancy; and as the tiniest star in the firmament casts a brighter, a more enduring, a more far-shining light than all the fires of the world could possibly do, if blazing in one grand conflagration, so the brightness of the humblest soul in heaven hereafter shall far surpass the most transcendent glory that all the honours and dignities, and magnificence of this passing world, can bestow upon the most exalted of its creatures. For, what is that happiness of heaven? Alas! when the inspired apostle failed to describe it, how shall I attempt the arduous task? But even the humblest soul that enters that blessed region of delight shall there behold God's eternal beauty, face to face, surrounded by myriads of bright angels, and those glorious, beatified spirits of men who, while they walked the earth, loved and served, and adored him with their whole hearts—those blessed Maytyrs who hesitated not, for his sake, to sing his praises from the midst of the blazing pile—who blanched not before the axe of the lictor, who went with smiles into the torturing rack—who walked with the air of bridegrooms amidst the lions and tigers of the Roman amphitheatre. There shall be seen those tender Virgins, who preserved their purity unsullied on earth, whose souls were never stained with the slightest blemish of sin, and who now “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth;” radiant with eternal beauty, those bright beings chant their hymns of praise before the throne of God: and oh! if even on earth the strains of holy music issuing from conventual choirs make the heart to glow with ecstasies of joy, or melt it into all the tenderness of sorrow, what blissful feelings must be excited by the celestial strains of those beautiful Virgins whose melody is inspired by God himself, whose hymns of praise and glory fill even him with pleasure and delight. Amongst this train of glorified spirits may be

seen the holy St. Francis of Assisium, now no longer an outcast, barefoot and in rags, squalid and hungry, bruised and bleeding for God, no longer prostrate in Portiuncula, or groaning amongst the brambles of Alverno, but dwelling in a land of light and peace, possessing a perpetuity of every good: beholding the sovereign and infinite beauty without a veil, bathed in a torrent of pure and ineffable delights, drinking of the river of life, nourished by truth, satiated by happiness, and inebriated with love; in transports of joy ever renewed, singing the canticle of the Seraphim, and the everlasting hymn of victory. Such is the happiness of which you, my brethren, may become partakers, by following even at a distance the virtues of this wonderful Saint, by imitating his poverty—not even in all its evangelical perfections, but by at least being poor in spirit, and by being disposed to sacrifice all you possess rather than offend your God, by being as he was, and as his divine Master was before him, “meek and humble of heart;” by bearing patiently the sufferings sent you by God in atonement for your sins, and as a payment for the eternal inheritance of his glory: for it is only by suffering you can ever expect to see the face of God. “The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence, and it is the violent who bear it away;” “Whom God loveth he chastiseth;” “Amen I say unto you,” says Christ, “narrow is the gate and strait the way that leads to life, and few there are that find it.”

But above all things imitate his love for our Blessed Lord in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar. That Blessed Lord is truly and really present at this moment on that altar, as truly and really as he is in the heavens where he sits at the right hand of his Eternal Father. He is looking down upon every one of us, and sees us as clearly, nay far more clearly than we see each other, for we see but the forms, while his all-searching eye pervades the inmost recesses of the heart. Not content by glorifying with his presence his elect in heaven, he loves us, sinners as we are, with such an excess of love that he deigns to come down from his eternal throne, to receive our homage, to grant our entreaties, to cheer us in our pilgrimage, and to give us even here a foretaste of that everlasting joy which awaits us hereafter. Oh! what condescension, what love. And what have we done to deserve this favour? “What

is man, O Lord, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldst visit him?" Alas! we are poor miserable sinners, who can never for one moment remain true to the calls of grace, who are even deflecting from the paths of virtue, "who have forsaken the right ways and gone into the crooked ways." And in all our tortuous wanderings—through all our devious paths, we still hear that tender, that sweetly sad voice calling after us "Come to me all ye who labour and are heavy laden and I will refresh you." These words of exquisite sweetness fall upon our ears; but alas! how seldom do they reach our hearts. We live on in the paths of sin, "seeking the food that perisheth," leaving the manna of heaven for the flesh-pots of Egypt, forsaking the bread of angels for the husks of swine.

Oh! my brethren, know you not the sweetness that inebriates the soul of the worthy communicant? Recall the blissful morning when you were first admitted to that honour, and became participators of that joy: have you ever since experienced any pleasure like it? Is there one amongst you who would not barter all the so-called pleasures which sin has ever afforded you for the gladness, the rapture, the innocent heavenly joy of that one pure hour? Sin is a cheat, it is a thief—it runs away not only with the pleasures itself offers and never gives, but it ravishes and runs away with the pleasures with which grace enriches the soul. Why, then, pursue the paths of sin, and blindly delude yourselves with the hope that it may yet give pleasure? Ah! with God alone true pleasure can be found, for from him alone comes all that is good and great and noble, and such true pleasure is. Away from God, we experience misery and woe—with God we revel in joy and delight. Away from him, our hearts are never at rest—with him we settle into everlasting tranquillity. As the wave on the river foams and frets, and never rests until it sinks into the bosom of the ocean, so our soul is ever tossed about by the winds of tribulation and the tempests of passion, until it arrives at the ocean of eternity, where it is absorbed in the bosom of the Almighty, and rests in peace for ever.

"Thou hast made us, O Lord, for thyself, and our hearts cannot rest until they rest in thee."

Arise, then, sluggard soul, and embrace thy God. He

is waiting for thee with eager expectation—if you disappoint him, you will renew those pangs that agonised his soul in the Garden of Olives, that empurpled the cross with his sacred blood in Calvary. Oh! do not renew that tragedy of tragedies; but rise and go to your Father, taste the sweetness of forgiveness, and banquet on the plenty of that Father's house. "Come you who labour and are heavy-laden and he will refresh you."

Oh! Jesus God of love, "whose delights are to be with the children of men," grant us thy grace to love thee with our whole hearts—grant us henceforward to receive thee into our bosoms with all the love thy love deserves, that having tasted on earth and seen how sweet was the Lord, we may be worthy to enjoy in the kingdom of thy glory the everlasting banquet of thy love. Amen.

SERMON.

PANEGYRIC OF SAINT FINBAR, PATRON SAINT OF THE DIOCESE OF CORK.¹

“The wise man shall seek out the wisdom of all the ancients, and will be occupied in the prophets . . . he will give his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him, and he will pray in the sight of the Most High. He will pour forth the words of his wisdom as showers, and in his prayer he will confess to the Lord, . . . He shall shew forth the discipline he hath learned, and shall glory in the law of the covenant of the Lord. Many shall praise his wisdom and it shall never be forgotten. The memory of him shall not depart away, and his name shall be in request from generation to generation. Nations shall declare his wisdom, and the Church shall shew forth his praise.”—ECCLESIASTICUS, xxxix. 1, and following verses.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—We are assembled here to-night to celebrate the memory of a great and glorious Saint of the Church of God, of whose character and history those words of divine wisdom appear to me to afford a most perfect and apposite delineation. Throughout the entire course of the narrative which I shall deliver to you of his life, you cannot but perceive the faithful aptitude of the description; you cannot fail to observe how diligently he sought out the wisdom of the ancients, and how he was occupied in the prophets—how he gave his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him, and how he prayed in the sight of the Most High—how he poured forth the words of his wisdom in showers—how he showed forth the discipline he had learned, and gloried in the law of the covenant of the Lord. And you will also see with what prophetic truth the posthumous fame of the Saint has been described by the Wise Man when he says “Many shall praise his wisdom, and it shall never be

¹ Preached in the Church of St. Finbar, Cork, September 27, 1863.

forgotten—the memory of him shall not depart away, and his name shall be in request from generation to generation. Nations shall declare his wisdom and the Church shall show forth his praise.” I come not to describe to you to-night the life and actions of any great hero of this world. I do not seek to awaken your admiration by describing the exploits of some famous general, or the diplomatic tactics of some celebrated statesman. Mine is no story of blood-red battlefields and glorious victories—my hero shone neither on the field nor in the cabinet—he was not the inventor of a new philosophy, but the obsequious disciple of an old one. We have not heard that he was eloquent, nor does it appear that he was distinguished as a writer—he was not noble nor was he wealthy—his birth was probably obscure, and his life was certainly secluded, and yet, strange as it may appear after the lapse of twelve hundred years, his memory is green in the souls of his posterity, as the grass that still blooms on the “lone little island” which in early life his sainted footsteps trod. “The just man,” says the Sacred Scripture, “shall be in eternal remembrance,” and so it was with St. Finbar. His was the heroism of justice, of virtue, of wisdom—his battles were those which he fought against the world, the flesh and the devil—his victories were those which he gained over that triple alliance of his enemies—his philosophy was that of Jesus the Son of God, his eloquence was the simple but moving eloquence of the gospel, by which he exhorted to virtue and deterred from vice—his only writing was that by which he unconsciously inscribed his name on the memories of men—Christianity was his most excellent patent of nobility—and his only wealth and inheritance were the grace of the Almighty during life, and after death that glory which he now enjoys, and which was entailed on him from his Eternal Father, who has said, “They who instruct others unto justice shall shine like stars for all eternity.” We all desire to know something of the great men of olden times, and we are justified in praising them by the example of the Sacred Scriptures, but, to us citizens of Cork, and much more to us members of this Parish, it must be particularly interesting to know something of the life of the great Saint to whose zeal for religion is justly attributed not only the blessing of the Christian faith, whose holy light still warmly burns in the

breasts of the people, but also the origin and source of the very city in which we dwell, and in which we from year to year commemorate the virtues and glories of him who founded it by his industry, and sanctified it by his teaching and example.

I will be candid enough to inform you that the materials from which we gather the history of our Patron Saint are meagre and scanty in the extreme. After twelve long centuries this is not unnatural. Our Saint lived in the very infancy of a society to which he himself gave birth, and any records that might have been preserved could scarcely have escaped, in subsequent centuries, the ravaging hand of the destroyer—the very language in which his life may have been written by some contemporary historian is well-nigh forgotten, and as we can only trust for information to the vague traditions of those who have gone before us, it is not too much to say that we know but very little indeed of the life and actions of St. Finbar. And even though every facility were afforded for perpetuating the memory of the Saint, such was the secrecy in which he lived, and such the monotonous course of his monastic life, that only few striking events could have elicited the eulogy of the biographer, or enlist the interest of the reader. And in point of fact this steady perseverance in the practice of monastic virtue in an exalted degree was exactly what constituted Finbar a perfect hero. Speak not to me of your heroes who conquer the world and cannot subdue their own pettiest passions; who, gifted by God with souls which might grasp the highest pinnacles of heaven, are content to gain an ascendancy in this little world, and curtail their hopes of immortality to the expectation of living, forsooth, in the memories of men. But hold up to eternal admiration the man who, steeled against the enchantments of a cheating world, plunges into the depths of solitude and there gives glory to his great Creator, who with the passions of the flesh holds a hard struggle, an unceasing warfare, and wins in the end the victor's crown of eternal glory—who enters the arena with Satan, the arch-enemy of man, and vanquishes him who deemed himself not an unequal match to war against the very God who made him. Praise the man who, like his great Master and model is “meek and humble of heart,” and yet silently does more good for his fellow-creatures,

and is remembered longer and more affectionately than the proudest and most exalted monarchs, statesmen, philosophers, or philanthropists that have ever been held up by worldlings for the love and veneration of mankind. Such was St. Finbar.

The period at which our Saint was born is the subject of one of the brightest pages in all the history of Ireland. Through whole wastes of misery—of degradation from within, and persecution from without—it is the only bright spot on which memory loves to dwell—the period when our native land so justly earned and won the proud appellation of “Island of Saints and Sages.” It was the period when, with the fall of the Roman Empire, the arts and sciences and civilization itself were well-nigh trampled out and extinguished from the face of Europe. The barbarous tribes of the North and the savage marauders of the East, had passed, in furious array, from country to country, effacing every vestige of refinement, demolishing the edifices of learning and religion—a terror to the inhabitants, whose only care was to learn the arts of war, by which they might repel the invader, and rescue even the necessities of life from the grasp of the despoiler. Amidst the general wreck of civilization and refinement, the Monastic institute alone, like the ark amidst the waters of the deluge, became the depository of learning; but when even that sacred vehicle was threatened with destruction by the waves of persecution, as the dove sallied forth from the window of the ark, so knowledge, quitting its precarious abode, spread its wings over the waters, and, amidst the vast and billowy waste, could find no spot on which to rest its weary limbs but Erin, the emerald Isle of the West. And fondly was the sacred visitant welcomed to the hospitable embraces of the Celtic race; and many a sacred shrine and many a holy fane was erected by the energy and zeal of that glorious people, to cherish the heavenly essence and render it “racy of the soil.” St. Patrick had been gathered to the dust a century and more—religion flourished in the land—suddenly monasteries everywhere sprang, as by the hand of the enchanter, from the earth—to every monastery a school was attached; these schools, in many instances, swelled to the dimensions of Colleges, and many attained the magnificent proportions and characteristics of Universities—the monastic schools of Kildare, Glendalough,

Tuam and Armagh, Derry and Lismore, might well compete with the most distinguished academies of Athens or of Rome in their hey-days of power, and could boast of a cultivation and refinement for which the proverbial elegance of ancient Corinth might seek, but would seek in vain, to supply a parallel. From all parts of Europe—'tis an oft-told tale, but, as so few honours remain to us now-a-days, we may be pardoned for dwelling with lingering fondness on the glories of the past—from all parts of Europe flocked the youthful representatives of all that was left of nobility, of elegance, and taste, to receive from the polished Celt the refinement they sought for in vain at home. The Celt was not only scholarly and saintly—hospitality was with him a noble instinct. Not only was learning gratuitously offered to the Continental stranger, but the necessities, and probably the luxuries of life, were freely placed at his disposal. Gaul and Frank, Angle and Saxon, mingled together on one common ground. They sought from their distant homes that happy isle where piety and learning grew like twin sisters, lovingly together; where peace and plenty smiled beneficently around; where the soil was ever fruitful, and the air for ever genial; where the footstep of persecution had not yet left its bloody track; where smiling faces told of happy hearts, and every boyish dream of the lovely Inisfail found a bright and glorious realization.

Remarkable above the rest of those great seminaries of learning was the Monastery of Banchoir, now Bangor, whose ruins, on the banks of Belfast Lough, still attest its ancient amplitude and splendour. The great St. Bernard, writing of this celebrated school, says that "In the sixth century, under Saint Congal, the Monastery of Banchoir was a most noble one, containing many thousands of monks, and itself the chief of many monasteries. So fruitful was it of holy men, and multiplying so greatly to the Lord, that Luanes alone, a subject of the house, founded no less than one hundred monasteries. This I mention," says he, "that the reader may form some notion of the number of religious that existed in those days in Ireland." Amongst the students of this great university, towards the close of the sixth century, under the presidency of St. Congan, was a fair-haired and, probably a fair-faced, youth from Connaught, named Lochan, whose zeal for learning

was only second to that which he evinced in the sacred cause of religion. From the complexion of his hair, he was named by his fellow-students Finbarra, which literally means "fair-haired," and in which you will easily recognize the Anglicised form of Finbar. He was sprung of a Celtic sept, and was born on the shore of the Atlantic, not far from the site at present occupied by the town of Galway. What position in life his parents held, history does not inform us, nor is it a matter of any importance to know. In the great academy of the North he soon attracted, by his piety and genius, the marked attention of the sainted Congal.

At this period of our history the ecclesiastics of Ireland manifested as chivalric a spirit in the fulfilment of their ministry as they do even at the present day. Not content to cherish the light of faith at home, it was their glory to leave their native land, and preach the religion of Christ to "nations who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death." While some on their own soil imparted the blessings of education and refinement to the stranger, others went abroad over the face of Europe, and to the Pagan and Barbarian communicated the inestimable advantages of civilization and religion. Columba sought the shores of England and Scotland—Columbanus traversed France and Italy and Germany—Gall betook himself to Switzerland—Fiacrius to Meaux—the learned Virgilius preached at Saltzburgh—Frigidian evangelized Lucca—and Fridolin sanctified Lorraine—Finbar was fired with the chivalric enthusiasm of the age, and longed to emulate the labours and partake of the glories of his brethren. But the holy Congal, restraining the impetuosity of the youth, instead of sending him to foreign lands, sought out a spot in his own, where the gifted Lochan might announce the Gospel of the Lord, and preach the glories of the cross. The South of Ireland—the County of Cork—was the scene selected for the Apostolic labours of the Saint, and thither accordingly he bent his way, accompanied by some fellow-labourers from the academic halls and monastic cells of the far-famed Banchoir. He had previously received the order of priesthood, and was evidently determined to consecrate himself, without reserve, to the service of his Maker.

It is evident to any one who contemplates with a curious

eye the ruins of religious edifices strewn throughout the country at the present day, that the saints of old had a peculiarly elegant taste in the selection of sites, distinguished for natural beauty, on which to erect their monasteries and churches. In this respect our Patron Saint was singularly felicitous. He sought and discovered, by whose assistance I know not, as a site for his first monastery, one of the wildest, most secluded, and most enchanting spots in all the south of Ireland—a spot which has been for centuries the admiration of the tourist, the love of the painter, the delight of the antiquarian—which derives its name from him, and where still, after the lapse of twelve centuries, survive the ruins of those narrow cells wherein he and his fellow-monks passed their solitary lives, and poured forth in blessed unison to the Most High their sighs of repentance and their hymns of praise—I allude to the far-famed Gougane Barra. There, in the midst of an amphitheatre of precipitous mountains, down whose rocky and naked sides rush a thousand streamlets, is found a large and, betimes, a placid lake, in the midst of which is a green island, blooming all the more beautifully by contrast with the barren scenery around. Far away, as it must have been, from the busy haunts of men, it was the beau-ideal of a monastic solitude; and, to the hermitical eye of St. Finbar, its adaptability to his views was evident at a glance. A little monastery was built on the island, and here he and his monks dwelt—we know not how long. But, oh! what a glorious spectacle was that Island monastery in the midst of that mountain solitude! From the rising to the setting of the sun the incense of prayer ascended from that lonely isle, and was wafted by angels over the mountains to the throne of the Most High. The echoes of the hills were never responsive save to the thrilling chorus or the swelling psalm. On a lofty altar, in the open air, many a time did the holy Finbar offer to the Lord the adorable sacrifice of the Body and Blood of his Divine Son, propitiating the wrath of heaven, and bringing down benedictions which fructify amongst us to the present day. Sequestered from all the world, those holy men conversed with God alone! They continually praised the Lord in his works; they gazed on the tall mountains on whose misty tops the royal eagle found congenial eyrie, and praised the Omnipotence of him who had

robed them in such majestic grandeur ! The placid lake, glistening in the summer sunshine, reminded them of the heavenly Jerusalem whose streets are paved with the purest gold ; and when the storm-winds rose, and the tempest shrieked, and when the face of heaven grew black, and the thousand torrents rushed from the mountain-tops, in furious array, jumping from crag to crag, and then foaming and seething in the lake below ; when the forked lightnings flittered from hill to hill with sublime but awful glare, and the booming thunders bellowed forth from mountain to mountain in echoes interminable, the lonely monks, though leading spotless lives, yet trembling for their sins, bethought themselves of the day of doom, and fancied they heard above the storm-clouds the trump of the archangel, and the denouncing voice of him who “maketh the clouds his chariot and walketh upon the wings of the winds.”

Great schemes are matured in solitude ; so it was with Christianity. Our Divine Redeemer spent thirty years in the solitude of Nazareth before he came forth to preach the wonders of the gospel—so was it also with St. Finbar. In the almost impervious recesses of Gougane Barra, he conceived the idea of erecting in some other part of the county a monastery, a church, and a school, by whose triple influence religion and learning might be more widely extended, and a greater measure of glory be awarded to his Creator. Leaving his Island monastery to the care of some of his fellow-monks, he travelled, accompanied by others, along the winding banks of the Lee, and never ceased until he reached the shore of a large lake, formed by the river, about fifteen miles from where it joins the ocean. This lake, my brethren, was called Lough Eire, and spread its waters over the very spot now occupied by the city of Cork. On the southern bank of the lake, on an elevated ground, he found an agreeable site and a luxuriant soil, and there, so to speak, the pilgrim pitched his tent. Having obtained, as some authors assure us, a grant of land from a local chieftain named Edo, he proceeded to build, and soon a large monastery rose, overhanging the Lee, not far from the site of the Queen’s College. The grounds attached to the monastery extended from the Lee on the north to the “Lough” on the south, and to a considerable length from east to west. To the monastery a large school or college was attached, and, for

the use of the monks and scholars, a church was also raised where the Protestant Cathedral now stands. All things went on well. Religion and Learning advanced hand in hand. One thing, however, was wanting to crown the work with complete success, and this was the benediction of the Holy See. Accordingly, the good Saint took up his staff once more, and braving the perils of the sea and land, and what was more formidable than either, the fierce passions of men, proceeded on his long and difficult pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Apostles. He was accompanied by St. Maidoc of Ferns, and St. David, Bishop of Menevia in Wales, whose friendship he had probably acquired within the hallowed walls of the College of Banchoir. The Pontiff at this time was Gregory the Great. Before that Pontiff had reached the purple he had a pupil named by classic writers Macrobius. This Macrobius was tutor to Finbar, in the monastery of Bangor; and if ever the holy man reached Rome again in the lifetime of Gregory, he must have fully imbued the Pontiff with exalted notions of the sanctity and learning of the fair-haired Lochan. However this may be, Gregory the Great received Finbar with all the respect a Saint deserves, and which a sainted successor of Christ knows so well to display. By that holy Pope Finbar was created first Bishop of Cork. He returned to his beloved monastery full of grace and power, and became the first of a long line of bishops, which lasts in unbroken succession till the present day. The blessing imparted by the successor of Peter to the nascent diocese invigorated the workmen with renewed zeal, and enriched their labours with a golden harvest. The school founded by Finbar soon acquired the proportions of a University, and its fame became so great, that it not only pervaded Ireland, but found an echo on every shore in Europe, and scholars, native and foreign, repaired in such numbers to its halls, that they were soon counted by hundreds, whilst its monks so exerted themselves in manual labour, and gave by their instruction and example such an impetus to industry, that, in the words of Colgan, "a desolate waste was soon changed into a large city." Such was its fame, and such the splendour of this great school, that it sent forth professors to many parts of Europe, from whom even the Roman alumnus was glad to learn the very language and

literature of his forefathers. Colgan makes mention of thirty-one of Finbar's disciples who founded monasteries in other places, which they placed under the protection of the parent house. St. Garvan, from whom Dungarvan is called, was a pupil of St. Finbar, as was also his successor St. Nesson, second Bishop of Cork—a man of great piety and learning—of whom Pope Innocent III., in a letter dated 1199, makes honourable mention.

After St. Finbar had spent seventeen years in the discharge of his episcopal functions, he died at Cloyne on the 25th day of September, about the year 630. St. Colman was then first Bishop of Cloyne, and our Saint was probably on a visit with him when he died. His remains were conveyed to Cork; and such was the veneration in which his person and his memory were held, that his body was enshrined in a silver case and preserved for more than 200 years in the Cathedral Church.

Such is the sum and substance of all that we learn of St. Finbar from the resources of history and tradition, and, doubtless, it is sufficient to excite in us the liveliest sensations of gratitude and admiration. We cannot but feel grateful to him for the sanctity and zeal by which he established amongst us the holy religion of Jesus Christ, to which we all belong, and without which there is no salvation. We should also feel grateful to God, who, in consideration of the merits of our holy Patron, has showered his blessings in such rich abundance on us all, giving us the grace after such a long lapse of time, and after so many and such terrible ordeals, to preserve in glorious entirety and with unflinching devotion the faith established in our midst by the fair-haired pilgrim of the West. Nor should our admiration be less ardent than our gratitude. In contemplating the greatness of Finbar, we have no aristocratic birth, no distinguished lineage to admire. As I have said, he was no great general or conqueror, like Cæsar or Alexander—he has not earned immortality by trampling out or erecting a new dynasty, like Napoleon, but oh! to those heroes whose deeds emblazon the pages of history—the victims of passion—the slaves of ambition, who will compare the humble cenobite, who sacrificed in the cause of God every impulse of nature, every endearing tie of home and kindred, every ambition of the heart, every dictate of self-love—who, in the lone-

cloister of that sequestered hermitage of Gougane Barra, where wilderness in awful majesty sat enthroned, thoughtless of his own glory, sought only the glory of Him by whose almighty hand those solitary works of wonder were created? Who shall compare to the so-called great men of this world, whose pathway was strewn with blood and in whose wake followed wretchedness and ruin, the humble but great recluse, the monuments of whose piety, wisdom, and genius survive the wreck of centuries, and the blessings of whose sanctified zeal are still visible in a city where commercial success entails temporal prosperity, and the preservation of the faith ensures the well-grounded expectation of eternal glory? The humility of Finbar was the secret of his immortality, temporal and eternal—"he took up his cross and followed Christ." Many have sought fame, and have not found it. Finbar fled from the babbling tongues of men; he held converse only with the lofty mountains and the lonely lakes, which though mute spoke trumpet-tongued to him of the glories of his Maker; he buried himself in the depths of solitude, but he little knew that he was only thus making himself a shining light in the Church of God. He little dreamed, when he read the words of wisdom how applicable they were to him—"Many shall praise his wisdom, and it shall never be forgotten—the memory of him shall not depart away, and his name shall be in request from generation to generation. Nations shall declare his wisdom, and the Church shall show forth his praise."

The institutions founded by Finbar no longer exist, it is true; they have yielded to the slow but inevitable destructiveness of Time; and well was Time aided in his destroying prowess by the wicked passions of mankind. The old Abbey met its first affliction in the first visit of the Danes to Cork in 820; for, according to the Four Masters, in that year those Northern marauders invaded Cork, plundered the Abbey, massacred the people, and burned the city to the ground. The bloodthirsty ferocities of those barbarian sea-rovers exceed the powers of language to describe. Virtue with them was vice, and vice was worshipped as a deity. Homicide was noble—piety was weakness—murder, rapine, and ruin were their glory and delight. They marched "escorted by fire and sword." The local chieftains received them hospitably, striving to

propitiate foes whom they could not subdue: but the wine-cup was only quaffed when it was filled with the blood of their murdered host, and in drunken glee they devoted to the flames the roof beneath which they reposed in safety from the labours of spoliation. The blood of priests, and the gold of churches were the especial objects of their two-fold greed; they lodged their horses in the chapels of palaces, and when they had wasted a Christian country they were wont to cry out in vaunting chorus—"We have sung the mass of the lances, it began at the rising of the sun." In one of those invasions they stole away the sacred shrine in which were encased the holy relics of St. Finbar. They often came again, and never came but to plunder and destroy. Soon the old Abbey began to lose its monastic character, and to present the appearance of a fortress, rather than the peaceful dwelling of a religious brotherhood. The spirit of religion also declined.

The year 1140 was a very troublous year in Cork. A bishop having died, a great division arose amongst the clergy and people as to the choice of a successor. St. Malachy, the celebrated Bishop of Armagh, and great friend of St. Bernard, was at this time apostolic delegate for all Ireland, having been appointed by Pope Innocent II., and was on a visit with his friend the Bishop of Lismore. It was reported to him that great discord prevailed in Cork. He determined, in his sacred character of legate, to bring matters, if possible, to an amicable settlement. Accordingly, having proceeded to Cork, he set aside both candidates for the mitre, and elevated to that dignity an humble Connaught monk—"a poor man, and a stranger," who had nothing to recommend him but extraordinary piety, modesty, and learning. This was Bishop Gilla Aedha O'Mugin. He is styled the "second founder" of the Abbey of Cork. He rebuilt and extended it; and to this day its site is, as you are aware, called after him, "Gill Abbey." He introduced the order of St. Augustine into Cork, which still flourishes in the heart of your city. Some few centuries after his time, the members of that order built the Abbey called "the Red Abbey," whose ruins still exist in our immediate neighbourhood. Gilla Aedha died in the year of the Norman invasion 1172, and was, to use the words of the Four Masters, "full of the grace of God, the tower

of the Virginity, and the wisdom of his time." Some centuries after the death of this holy bishop there came a spoiler more ruthless even than the Dane, for the Dane was content to rob the churches and abbeys of their gold, and to destroy human life, but the blood-thirsty minions of Henry and Elizabeth would ravish from the souls of the people that faith which was more precious to them than gold, but which they cherished with a tenacity and devotion that have excited, and will for ever excite, the wonder and admiration of mankind. Their abbeys were rifled and ransacked—their churches demolished or desecrated by the profane rites of the heretic—their monks and priests were hunted like wolves throughout the land; but the blood of the martyrs was here indeed the seed of Christianity: it were as easy to quench the stars of heaven as to eradicate from the Irish their love of learning and religion. Penal enactments strove for centuries to extinguish the elements of Christian teaching—to poison the sources whence flowed the pure waters of the Gospel; but the stream was no sooner dammed up in one point than it gushed forth from another: the tree was cut down, but it sprang up again from the roots with a richer and more abundant foliage, till the arm of the spoiler was wearied with his labour, and the exterminator discovered that he but propagated the germs which he thought to eliminate from the soil. Of the Monastery of Finbar there only remains one broken wall—of his church there survives but one Gothic archway; his University has altogether disappeared. What then?—"Si monumenta quæris, circumspice"—If you wish to behold the monuments of his piety and faith, look around. In your "beautiful citie" what are more beautiful than your churches? Behold them in the valley—behold them on the hill-top. Have you not your monasteries filled with holy men, the dispensers of learning, and the models of every virtue? Behold your convents—those hallowed receptacles of the devout female sex—shrines of all the beauty and all the purity of womanhood. There was a time when, within the walls of Gill Abbey, there dwelt no fewer than seventeen prelates and seven hundred monks and priests. Prelates and priests have passed away; but have you not in your city at this moment a priesthood, whose general character—whose unblemished lives—whose zeal for religion—whose

talents and learning are, perhaps, not paralleled in any other city in the world? Finbar is gone—Gill Aedha is no more; but to-day the Cathedral Chair of Cork is filled, and the crozier of Finbar is wielded by a Pontiff whose zeal for religion—whose large and cultivated mind—whose piety and philanthropy entitle him to rank amongst the most exalted prelates who have ever adorned by their virtues and talents the time-honoured hierarchy of Ireland.

“All things shall pass away,” says Christ, “but my words shall not pass away.” “Behold,” said he to his apostles, “I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” The gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church. Persecution has done her worst against the Church of Ireland, and yet she not only survives, but blooms and flourishes with all the beauty and freshness of virgin youth. What a glory is it for us—my brethren, that our ancestors fought out the good fight so well! If they had proved recreant to the cause of God, how unhappy would be our lot at the present moment! Born and brought up in heresy or infidelity, we should sit all our lives in “Darkness and in the shadow of death.” We should never know the bliss akin to heavenly that ravishes the soul, when by the words of God’s minister the last stain of sin is blotted away for ever! Weary and worn out with toil, we should never feel the sweet refreshment of the soul conferred by the Bread of Life—the adorable body and blood of our Divine Redeemer. We should live on from day to day, grovelling upon the earth, little better than the beasts of the field—thoughtless of the immortal souls within us, made to the image of God, and destined for the eternal enjoyment of him in the kingdom of his glory. And when the dark hour of death would warn us that our course was run, and that the awful day of eternity was about to dawn, oh! how sad, how bitter, how desolate would be the sensations of our souls—Jesus would not come as he comes to the dying Christian, to comfort and console by his corporeal presence. The minister of God would not soothe our dying pangs or turn into joy the sighs that would spring from our lonely sorrow. Think of the solitary shipwrecked mariner, as he sits at night upon a lonely rock where he must linger in agony till he dies. Dark, desolate, despairing, he looks abroad over the black bosom of the boundless sea, uncheered by one single

star-ray of heaven and pauses in maddening suspense until the up-heaving surge dashes him from his standing-place, and sweeps him shrieking into the waves for ever. So should it be with us, but for the faith of our forefathers. Stranded and shipwrecked in our dying hour, we should look in gloomy horror over the dark ocean of eternity without a ray of hope to cheer us in our misery, and pause, despairing, for the billows of death to dash us into the bottomless depths of the abyss. Thank God, it is otherwise. The blessings of men like Patrick and Finbar hover like sunbeams over the land, and though we may be the poorest people on the earth, we are the richest in the possession of the priceless inheritance of Faith. It is, therefore, our duty, my brethren, and it ought to be our glory and our pride, to cherish this inestimable boon, and to show forth in our lives that we are worthy disciples in the school of faith established here by our holy Patron. And, on this night, when the most adorable Body and Blood of our Divine Redeemer are exposed for the special veneration of the faithful, I think I cannot do better than ask you to cherish in your hearts an ardent love for that most holy sacrament as the best means of enlivening your faith, and meriting the patronage and intercession of the holy St. Finbar. "What is man, O Lord: that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldst visit him?" What have we done, O Lord! that thou shouldst descend from thy throne of glory and visit the poorest of thy servants? Thou art here in the midst of us, as thou wert on the night of the Last Supper amongst the Apostles—so near that we may behold thee—so condescending that we may converse with thee like friends—so generous that we may ask of thee what we please, and be sure to obtain it—so loving and tender that our bosoms may melt in the contemplation of thy sweetness—and yet so exalted, so glorious, so powerful, that we may exhaust the language of praise and adoration, and still be at a loss for epithets worthy of thy greatness. There is the great Lord, my brethren, looking down on us to-night—the same, who, on the last day, will appear in the clouds of heaven to judge us. Oh! let us propitiate Him now in the day of His mercy, for on that day His justice alone shall prevail; and believe me there is no safer way to avert the terrors of Jehosaphat than to keep the lamp of faith

for ever brightly burning in your bosoms—not that cold faith by which we merely believe in God, but that faith which worketh by charity, and which is so strongly recommended by Christ and His Apostles. Grant us, therefore, O Lord, the grace to believe in Thee, to hope in Thee, to love Thee, that when that last hour of earthly existence shall have passed away, we may experience in our souls the happy transition of faith into vision, and of hope into possession, charity alone remaining. And do thou, O holy Saint Finbar, intercede, we beseech thee, to God for us, that as it is to thy Apostolate our city is indebted for the blessing of Christian faith, we may so shape our conduct, and direct our lives, that following faithfully the beacon of that faith enkindled by thee before us, we may reach in safety the heaven of eternal bliss, to enjoy with thee the blessed society of God and his angels, for ever, and for ever. Amen.

SERMON.

DEDICATION OF THE CHAPEL OF THE PRESENTATION CONVENT (SOUTH), CORK.¹

“Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house, and the place where
Thy glory dwelleth.”—PSALM xxv. 8.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—We should be indeed sadly insensible to the sweetly inspiring influences of religion, if we could gaze without emotion on the imposing spectacle this day presented to our eyes. For what do we behold? Within the precincts of a spot consecrated for nearly a century to the cultivation of purity and holiness of conventual life, we behold a rare and striking exhibition of worship to the Most High. We behold a magnificent temple, constructed according to the choicest designs of architectural beauty, undergoing, according to the sublime ceremonial prescribed by the True Church, a process of consecration to the worshipful service of the living God. We behold a successor of the Apostles, invested with power by Christ Himself, presiding at this splendid ceremonial, assisted by a zealous and devoted clergy, and fortified by the prayers of a devoted sisterhood, by whose charity and zeal this temple has been erected—to whom it shall ever be a most delightful refuge in their trials and tribulations—and where, at any hour of their lives, prostrate before the Real Presence of their Saviour, they may “taste and see how sweet is the Lord.” Nay, more, after the lapse of three hundred years, during which this country has witnessed the demolition of her churches, the persecution of her priests, the disbandment of her religious orders, the proscription of her religion, what a joy it is to behold this one triumph of the faith—one other glory of the Church of Ireland! Truly it has

¹ Preached in the Chapel of the Presentation Convent, March 20, 1865.

been said that "the blood of the Martyrs is the seed of Christianity;" that seed has been long vegetating in our soil; but the fruit is at length visible throughout the land. Whithersoever we turn our eyes, we behold springing from the earth religious edifices, raised by the members of religious orders, or by a faithful people, poor in the goods of the world, but rich in the golden treasures of the heart—edifices varying in magnitude and splendour, from the Cathedral pile to the domestic fane, all frustrating the expectations of bigoted ignorance—all proving the fidelity of God to a well-trying and still faithful people; for now, as of old, "He is a strong and faithful God, keeping His covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and keep His commandments, unto a thousand generations."

For think not, my brethren, that it is by human power, by the abundance of wealth, or the progress of temporal prosperity, that temples are raised to the living God. No, "unless the Lord build the house, in vain they labour who build it." Ninety years ago, when the pious founder of the Presentation Order conceived the idea of erecting a convent on these grounds, her holy ambition was limited to the hard plodding labour of educating the children of the poor, and relieving, as far as was possible, their manifold wants; and if some little sanctuary were permitted to exist within those walls, where she might offer up the work of the day before the living presence of her God, she asked no more; she never aspired to the luxury of a church like this, whose very aspect inspires the beholder with religious emotions. It is hard to say, if, in her most fanciful anticipations of success, she ever looked forward to the possibility of a scene like that which we have this day the happiness to behold. But the vigilant eye of God looked with complacency on the labour of his servant, and as David, though beloved by God, was not permitted to enjoy the honour and reward of building the Temple of Jerusalem, but that honour was reserved for Solomon, his son, so it is for the successors of Nano Nagle that God has reserved the honour of building, and seeing this day consecrated to His service, the beautiful temple wherein we stand. And if the departed spirits of the just made perfect are permitted still—as why should they not?—to take an interest in the promotion of God's glory upon earth, may we not suppose that the beautiful spirit of that valiant

woman hovers to-day beneath the vaulted roof of this temple, as her ashes lie in its immediate proximity, and that she receives from the sight sensations of added bliss, while she hears before the throne of God, with smiles of joy, the prayers of the prelate, the clergy, the people, and her own pious sisters, invoking the benediction of the Lord on the glorious undertaking of this day? Sisters, it is not you alone who have built this house; it has been built, in good part, by the prayers of your departed foundress; those prayers which, united with the groans of an oppressed but faithful people, have tended to wrench asunder the fetters of political restrictions that so long bound our persecuted religion—prayers which have fostered amongst you that piety, the first germs of which she planted on this sacred soil—prayers which have engaged the co-operation of the Almighty in the erection of this Temple, which, without that co-operation, could never have been completed. Yes, “the finger of God is here.” “Unless the Lord build the house, in vain they labour who build it.”

And oh! my dear sisters, what a happiness is it for you, in this unchanging scene of your chosen solitude, to have at all times free access to this delightful sanctuary, where you may, like our first parents in Paradise, revel in the sweets of the society of God. For you solitude has not the monotony which renders it odious to the children of the world. Wrapt in silent contemplation before that sacred altar, where henceforward shall repose Jesus, your Spouse, your King, your God, your souls shall be entranced with varieties of delight unknown to the worldly votaries of pleasure. For them the intoxicating cup palls upon the taste, and they now despise what they coveted before; but for you the draught is ever new, delicious, perennial. You can well appreciate the ecstatic emotions of the Psalmist when he cried out—“How lovely are Thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts; my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of The Lord: my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the House of my God, rather than dwell in the tabernacles of sinners.” Here, like Mary, the grand prototype of every virtue to which you aspire, from the moment of your presentation in the temple, you can grow in grace and favour with your God. Like her, you have conse-

crated yourselves to Him for all the days of your lives. Like her, you have renounced the world, and all its pleasures, and all its vanities, that you may "see the delight of the Lord, and may visit His temple." And oh! think you that the generous, the grateful God, will not repay you for this great self-renunciation? Yes, even in this world He will repay you an hundred-fold, while the gay companions of your youth bask in the glitter of the assembly, or the glare of the ball-room, arrayed in all the gaudy frippery of fashion, with the stiff smile of forced pleasure covering their cheeks, and the bitter pang of discontent gnawing at their hearts. You ask no other light than that which streams from the lamp of the sanctuary, sequestered from the haunts of men: in the silent solitude of night, alone with God, you shall enjoy a happiness only surpassed by that which shall enrapture the soul hereafter, when it shall be freed from the gross trammels of the flesh, in the joyful regions of the blest. Oh! then, whatever be the rallying cry of this world's pleasure-seekers, let your watchword ever be—"Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy House, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth."

And to you also, my brethren, the consecration of this temple should be a subject of peculiar interest; not only because it shall be ever open to you as a calm retreat from the cares and tumults of the world, where you may devote yourselves undisturbed to the unspeakable charms of heavenly contemplation, but because here the pious prayers of these pure and spotless women shall ever ascend before the Throne of God, propitiating His wrath, excited by your sins, and bringing down ten thousand graces from Heaven for your souls. For, if we are assured by the sacred Word of God, that Sodom would have been saved at the prayer of Abraham, if only ten just men could have been found within its walls, are we not warranted in concluding that the justice and piety of the religious community that flourish in our midst are an earnest to us that God will not destroy us in our sins? This House of God, therefore, should ever be held by you in peculiar affection and respect, because, in all probability, for centuries to come, the incense of holy prayer shall continually ascend to Heaven before that altar, invoking the mercies of God in favour of you, and of your children's children.

But the consideration which should be paramount with us this day is the nature of the reverence and respect which we are bound to manifest to the temple of the Lord. To realize those feelings, we must have recourse to the sacred Word of God. My brethren, the presence of God is not confined to any one particular spot. His immensity fills all space; "the Heavens is my Throne," saith He, "and the Earth my footstool." God may therefore be worshipped in any part of created nature. His ear is open everywhere to the petitions of His children. On the summit of the highest mountain, or in the depths of the deepest valley, He hears the voice of man. "If I ascend up to Heaven," saith the Psalmist, "Thou art there, if I descend to hell, Thou art present, if I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." Nevertheless, He has ever wished that certain particular places should be regarded as specially consecrated to His service. Thus at a very early period of the history of man, we find God appearing to Jacob in the mysterious vision of a ladder, and when the patriarch "awaked out of sleep," we hear him exclaiming, doubtless by Divine inspiration, "Indeed the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." And trembling he said: "How terrible is this place; this is no other than the House of God, and the gate of Heaven;" and arising in the morning he took the stone which he had laid under his head, and set it up for a title, pouring oil upon the top of it. "And this stone, which I have set up for a title," said he, "shall be called the House of God." Moses also by the Divine command performed an act of worship before God, who appeared to him in the burning bush, for "the Lord called out from the midst of the bush, Moses, Moses," and he answered "Here I am." And the Lord said, "Come not hither, put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

During the forty years that the children of Israel were travelling through the desert, they had no other place of worship but a portable temple—that is to say, the Tabernacle, which was erected in the midst of their camp by the express orders of God Himself, who was pleased to accept the vows, oblations, and sacrifices of the people in that par-

ticular place. But the great King David was ashamed that no nobler structure was raised for the worship of his God : "And it came to pass when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest on every side from all his services, he said to Nathan, the prophet, dost thou see that I dwell in a house of cedar, and the Ark of God is lodged within skins?" God was pleased with the holy shame of his great servant David, and promised him that very night that his son should erect a temple to his honour. "And the Lord foretelleth to thee that the Lord shall make thee a house, and when thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will raise up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom ; he shall build a house to My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." And Solomon built the temple, and such were its splendour and magnificence, that it surpassed all the edifices ever raised by man. The wisest of men formed a just conception of the Majesty of his God, and the wealthiest of men was able to embody that conception in the most glorious work ever theretofore executed by human hands. Of the splendour of this work it is sufficient to say, that, in the language of the Scriptures, "there was nothing in the temple that was not covered with gold."

And to what end was this glorious temple raised? Was it that it might be a fit dwelling for the great God? Ah! no, for who, says the wise king, "who can be able to build Him a worthy house: If heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, who am I that I should be able to build him a house? But to this end only that incense may be burned before him." The great temple, with its walls of cedar, and its oracle overlaid with the purest gold—with its gilded floor, and its curiously wrought cherubims, and palm trees, and divers other representations, was raised for no other purpose than to hold the two tables of stone which Moses received from God on Mount Sinai; a portion of manna, and the rod of Aaron; and yet so sacred was it esteemed by God, that, after the tables of the law had been deposited therein, and the priests had come out of the sanctuary, it came to pass that a cloud filled the house of the Lord, and Solomon said: "The Lord said that he would dwell in a cloud. Building, I have built a house for thy dwelling, to be thy most firm

throne for ever." So sacred did God wish the temple to be held, that He caused fire to come down from Heaven and consume the holocausts that were offered at its consecration. The Jews who flocked to it from all parts beheld it with most reverential awe: its splendour and magnificence impressed them more than any other earthly thing with ideas of the greatness and glory of their God—its vast proportions bespoke His immensity—the hidden oracle wherein reposed the sacred treasures typified His inscrutable awe-inspiring Majesty—the cloud announced His presence, and the dazzling brilliance of the decorations proclaimed the brightness of His beauty, and the splendour of His glory, while the whole interior, which was one blaze of universal gold, brought forcibly before their minds the grandeur of the heavenly Jerusalem, where He reigns and shines and blesses for ever. Such was their veneration for this holy temple that they were accustomed to premise several ablutions and purifications before they would venture to approach even the exterior court that served as a barrier to keep them at a distance from the Holy of Holies, which was in the interior court of the temple. None but the priests were permitted to enter into the interior court, every other person being forbidden under pain of being stoned to death. Nay, the Holy of Holies was inaccessible to every one except the high priest himself, who, after many preparatory exercises of religion, was allowed to enter into it once a year with the blood of the immolated victims; this sacred place being a figure of Heaven which was shut against man, until Christ, our High Priest, entered there covered with his own precious blood, as is explained by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews.

When you hear of these wonderful exhibitions of respect and veneration for the temple of Jerusalem, are you not surprised, my brethren, and shocked at the indifference, the thoughtlessness, perhaps the irreverence, with which you sometimes appear in the house of God? For oh! my brethren, if the temple of old was worthy of respect, how infinitely more worthy of it are the temples of the new law; for with all its splendour and magnificence and fame, that illustrious edifice was but a type, a shadow of the temples erected in the Christian dispensation—it was as much beneath our temples as a shadow is beneath a substance—as much as the treasures of the ancient Holy of

Holies were inferior to the inexhaustible riches of our tabernacles—as much as the immolated sheep and oxen of Judaistic worship fell short of the Divine victim whose precious blood mystically flows upon our altars in expiation of the sins of men. In our temples God resides not as in a cloud, but dwells Himself in person as He dwells in the highest heights of Heaven; no barrier is here to keep off the votary—no ablutions or purifications are exacted, for even the soul-stained sinner may approach to solicit grace and pardon: here it is not the blood of sheep and oxen flows, but the blood of Jesus our Lord, that flowed upon the cross, here cries to Heaven for mercy on mankind. He who fills the heavens with His glory, and thrills the souls of the blest with exquisite raptures of delight, is here truly present, palpable to the touch, visible to the eye, speaking to the soul, divested of the terrors of His Majesty, a comforter, a consoler, a father, a brother, a friend to the very humblest of his creatures. He sits like a king upon his throne, but oh! with mildness and sweetness rare to royalty, to receive the petitions of the most wretched of his subjects—to heal the bruised heart—to dry the tears of the weeper—to elicit the tears of the hard-hearted—to quicken with more entrancing rapture the souls of those who revel in the sweetness of his love—to announce pardon to the sinner—freedom to the captive—salvation to the sinking—hope to the despairing—life and love and joy to all. Oh! what think you would have been the reverential awe of the Jews of old, if, instead of the tables of the law, their tabernacle contained the eternal Lawgiver Himself? How meek would have been their deportment, how deep the conviction of their unworthiness to approach; how exact would have been the process of purification; in a word, how pure and holy would have been their sentiments of religion. Had the great King David been so blest as to kneel before a tabernacle containing the body of his Lord, how ecstatic would have been the emotions of his soul: in what thrilling words would his glorious psalms convey the transports of his joy: with what increased fervour would he exclaim, “Lord I have loved the beauty of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth.” We are told that so great was his reverence for the ark of the covenant, that he caused it to be born in triumph to the capital of his kingdom—he danced before it in ec-

stasies of delight—he, and “all Israel played before it all kinds of musical instruments, harps, and lutes, and timbrels, and cornets, and cymbals;” and when it was set in its place he had holocausts and peace-offerings burnt before it, in royal profusion and magnificence. And yet behold with what indifference we often appear, not before the ark of the covenant, but before the real presence of Him who exists from all eternity—who made the heavens and the earth, the sun, the moon, and stars—who called us all out of nothing—in whose hands are our eternal destinies—whose presence fills all space—of whose greatness and power and glory there is no end; yes, our temples are the dwellings of God—He resides in them as he does in the courts of Heaven; hence the prophet has styled them the “heavens on earth” promised to the children of the New Testament. A new Heaven is this day given to us all, whither those who wish may come and receive a foretaste of that joy which awaits the just in the heavens beyond the skies.

To conclude, my brethren, whether in the vast temple of Nature, filled with God’s immensity, beneath the arched canopy of heaven, or in the architectural edifice raised by human hands beneath the vaulted roof, “hallowed for ever be the name of God.” May that name be worshipped through the flowing years of centuries within these sacred walls. May each successive generation see the ranks of this pious sisterhood recruited from the pure daughters of our country to celebrate the praises of the Lord, and to proclaim His glory, to offer the incense of prayer, and sing melodious utterances of homage before His throne. For this is the end of our creation, and no other; and human hands were never better employed than in raising this temple to the living God; and human voices never uttered sounds sublimer, or more worthy the dignity of man, than when they make the walls of His temple resonant with the melody of praise to the Lord. And the Lord hears with delight the melody of His praise, and His spirit overshadows the temple, every stone of which is now sacred to the glory of His name. An hour ago it was an ordinary edifice, and might have been devoted to any end it pleased the owner; but it is now sacred to the Lord, and will be sacred for ever; and as the Lord said to Solomon, after the consecration of the Temple of Jerusalem, so does He say in

spirit to the consecrating prelate to day, "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication which thou hast made before me; I have sanctified this house which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever, and my eyes and my heart shall be there always." Whenever, therefore, you enter this temple, remember that the Lord is here. Enter into the spirit of the Patriarch Jacob, when he exclaimed, "How terrible is this place; this is no other but the House of God, and the gate of heaven—the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not;" and every prayer you utter here from a pure heart, God will hear and heed. With a deep spirit of humility, therefore, and a great confidence in Thee, oh! my God, I, Thy unworthy servant, presume to address to Thee my first prayer in this temple; and that prayer is, that we all, but more particularly those pious Sisters who have raised this edifice to the glory of Thy name, having served Thee worthily in this temple made with hands, may be admitted for ever hereafter into the temple of Thy glory in the heavenly Jerusalem, where gazing at the dazzling splendour of Thy eternal dwelling-place, we may experience the ineffable raptures of the beatified ones, who, while living on the earth "loved the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth."

SERMON

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF AN ORGAN.

“Praise ye the Lord in His holy places : praise ye Him in the firmament of His power : praise ye Him for His mighty acts : praise ye Him according to the multitude of His greatness : praise Him with the sound of trumpet : praise Him with psaltry and harp : praise Him with timbrel and choir : praise Him with strings and organs : praise Him on high sounding cymbals : praise Him on cymbals of joy : let every spirit praise the Lord.” Alleluia. Psalms cl.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN.—The end for which man was created was that he might employ every energy of his body, and every faculty of his soul, in promoting the glory of his Omnipotent Creator. This is the end not only of man, but of every creature that has ever issued from the hand of God, from the brightest angel that ministers before His throne to the invisible insect that floats in the beam of the noonday sun, and all creation does proclaim His glory. “The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands.” God exists for ever, and, had he so wished, need never have created any being outside Himself. He might have existed through all the ages of eternity, happy and glorious in the contemplation of His own Divine perfections; but of his own free will He created beings who might proclaim His glory, and share the blessing of beholding it. He created the angels, who saw Him face to face, who made the heavens resonant with the melody of His praise, and were enraptured with the ineffable delights of His beauty and His love. He created the Heavens and the earth, the sun and moon, and stars, that by fulfilling the laws prescribed by Him for their harmonious working, they might announce His power and

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His wisdom, and by appealing to the admiration of man might stimulate him to the adoration of an all-wise and all-powerful Creator. The glory of God, therefore, is paramount to all other things; and that is why the Divine Teacher of mankind, when prescribing a prayer that men might utter to their God, made its first petition be that His name might be blessed and glorified by all His creatures, "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name;" and man is most admirably constituted for enhancing the glory of his Maker—he has a soul made to the image of his God, a spiritual essence, bright and beautiful beyond the beings of earth, endowed with a vast intellectual scope by which he may contemplate the wonders of creation, and susceptible of love itself in all its infinitude of sweetness. But in addition to man's soul, he has a body also endowed with various powers and capabilities, all wondrous, even to man himself, but all calculated in their own way to proclaim the infinite glory of God. Nay, such is the irresistible tendency of man's nature, that he finds no happiness in any other pursuit than that which aims at promoting the glory of his Maker. Should he make the attempt at seeking happiness in any other manner, he finds that he seizes only a phantom, while the real object of his pursuit eludes his grasp, and leaves him a victim to disappointment and despair; but if there be one faculty which, more than another, gives glory to God, it is the human voice, for by that faculty, more than any other, do the emotions and aspirations of the soul find utterance. By the voice man declares his admiration of the works of God—by the voice he praises and glorifies His name—by the voice he begs for grace and mercy, by the voice he teaches others to sing the praises and proclaim the glories of the Lord. And so wondrously has God fashioned this expressive organ of the voice, that he has rendered it capable of producing a variety of sweet melodious intonations peculiarly adapted for the singing of His praises, and which by some mysterious efficacy move the soul to every exalting and ennobling passion. Music, therefore, forms one of the most important elements in the worship of God. It is as old as the world, and exerts its influence on every human breast. The unreasoning infant and the untutored savage are alike susceptible of its power—it disinfects, as it were, the

human soul—it purifies it from earthly passions, from grovelling tastes, and sinful longings—it inspires sensations of purest and sweetest pleasure, and awakens in it aspirations for happiness beyond what this world can afford. Like some ethereal spirit, sacred music dives into the deepest recesses of our souls, lowering though they be, and tempest-tossed by the storms of passion and sin, and brings up to the surface golden treasures of sorrow and love, of whose existence we were ourselves unconscious, but which we may present as priceless offerings of homage at the throne of God.

Hence the holy Church, the administratrix of the rites of worship on earth, has ever called music to her aid in proclaiming the glories of God. Through every age the voices of her children have resounded in her temples, uttering hymns and canticles of praise to Him: and where wealth has enabled men to add pomp and splendour to the simplicity of worship, they have introduced into the temple instruments made to imitate the human voice, with which the voice may beautifully blend, and an additional charm be given to the efficacy of sacred song.

Animated by this universal spirit of the Church, you are assembled here to-day to inaugurate a musical addition to your rites of Divine worship, and by so doing you manifest to the world your recognition of the grand truth which I have enunciated, that man was made for no other end than to proclaim with every faculty of mind and body the infinite glory of his Creator. You are performing a great and holy work. You prove how fully you are imbued with the spirit of the Psalmist, when he exclaimed—"Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." You are adopting a means by which piety may be fostered amongst you—by which pure and holy thoughts may be inspired into the breasts of the people—by which hardened hearts may be softened, and troubled hearts be soothed; you perform a work on which Heaven smiles, for, as the Psalmist says—"It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to sing to Thy name, O Most High." But that your piety may be still further stimulated, I will avail myself of this occasion to show you briefly the importance God attaches to sacred song; and I will conclude what I have to say by demonstrating to you the still greater importance of singing the praises of God,

not by the attuning of melodies, which may captivate and enchant the human ear, but by the practice of virtue, and the homage of your souls—by making the whole tenor of your lives harmonize with the precepts of the Gospel—by worshiping God, not with your lips, but with your hearts, and by attuning every aspiration of your souls into sighings and longings for the eternal promotion of His glory, and the eternal enjoyment of His love.

I.—No tribes or natives have been known from the beginning of the world that did not employ vocal music in their worship of the Deity. Men used it to proclaim His Divine praises, or to deprecate his wrath; and the universality of the custom clearly indicates an instinct connected with the instinct that points out even to the savage the existence of some Supreme Being, the ruler of his fate, and the arbiter of his destiny. Music is coeval with man, and has ever been a most acceptable form of homage to the Almighty. “Where wast thou,” says the Lord to Job, “when I laid the foundations of the earth, or who laid the corner-stone thereof, when the morning stars praised Me together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody?” The most enchanting passages of Holy Writ are the Psalms and Canticles sung by the Patriarchs and Prophets of old, inspired by God himself, and commemorating His glories, and the wonders of His works. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were accustomed to sing the praises of their Divine “Protector;” and who, even at this distant age, is not struck with wonder and admiration of the glorious Canticles of Moses on the discomfiture of Pharaoh? “Let us sing to the Lord, for He is gloriously magnified—the horse and the rider He hath thrown into the sea—the Lord is my strength and my praise, and He is become salvation to me; He is my God, and I will glorify Him—the God of my fathers, and I will exalt Him—the Lord is a man of war—Almighty is His name.” This inspired song, the oldest on record, was sung by Moses, and three millions of the Israelites, in alternate verses, while his sister Mary, the prophetess, and all the women, went forth with their timbrels, and swelled the sacred anthem of praise to the Most High.

On every succeeding manifestation of God’s love for His people, it was usual for their chiefs to compose a new canticle of praise and thanksgiving; and as God’s love

was frequently displayed, so, frequently are the Canticles found in the words of Holy Writ, composed by the Judges, Kings, and Prophets of Israel, from Moses to Solomon, and from Solomon to Judas Machabæus. The name of the great King David is associated with sacred song, as the name of Adam is associated with the Creation, or the name of Noah with the Deluge. Who that reads his psalms is not rapt with delight by the magnificence of his style—the tenderness of his piety, and the unspeakable sublimity of his conceptions? He made a choir of four thousand singers to chant those psalms before the tabernacle of the Lord, and at morning and evening his priests sang them, accompanied by trumpets and other musical instruments, while he himself, the Psalmist, King, and Prophet, often joined the sacred band, and swelled the shout of praise and benediction. Those four thousand performed on solemn occasions in the temple erected by Solomon, son of David, and the office of sacred chorister became with them hereditary, so that it was their duty, and their pride, to train up their children from infancy to sing the praises of the Lord, and transmit the profession to their posterity as one of the noblest spheres proposed to man for the acquisition of fame, and the fulfilment of laudable ambition. On the dedication of the temple, we learn from the sacred Scriptures, a splendid precedent for the use of musical instruments in the House of God. The sacred historian informs us that, on that magnificent occasion, “The Levites, and the singing men, with their sons and their brethren, clothed with fine linen, sounded with cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, standing on the east side of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding trumpets; so, when they all sounded together, both with trumpet and voice, and cymbals and organs, and with divers kinds of instruments, and lifted up their voice on high, the sound was heard afar off; so that when they began to praise the Lord, and to say, give glory to the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever, the House of God was filled with a cloud, nor could the priests stand and minister, by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the House of God.” Nor, when Israel was led captive into Babylon, did her children forget her songs of praise, with which, in the days of their freedom, they had made the temple ring. They brought with them,

as the dearest relics of their native land, the musical instruments to whose accompaniment they were wont to chant their sacred hymns, and in the privacy of their captivity they sang, in tones of sadness, melodies of repentance for the wickedness of their people, and of propitiation of their offended God ; but the delightful hymns of praise divine they would not sing, however warmly entreated. Those they held too sacred for the profane admiration of their unbelieving conquerors. "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, while we remembered Sion. On the willows in the midst thereof we hung up our instruments, for they that led us into captivity required the words of songs, and they that carried us away said, 'Sing to us a hymn of the songs of Sion.' How shall we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land ?" On the restoration of the Jews to their own country, a new temple was raised on the model of the old, and the foundations were laid with much ceremony, of which the Psalms of David, accompanied by sacred instrumental music, formed a most important part. "And," says the sacred Scripture, "when the masons laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their ornaments, with the trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise God by the hands of David, King of Israel, and they sang together hymns, and praise to the Lord." Thus the choral service, as instituted by King David, continued without intermission to be performed in the temple, even until its destruction by the Romans, and the final dispersion of the Jews.

Our Blessed Saviour came upon the earth, not to destroy but to fulfil the law ; whatever rite or institution existed in the old law, having for its object an appeal to the carnal conception of a material people He abolished, but whatever tended to promote the worship of God "in spirit and truth," He preserved to be commended to his followers by word and example. Animated by this spirit, the early Christians abrogated the use of musical instruments in the ceremonies of divine worship, because they considered that their exciting sounds moved to a sensuous enthusiasm, rather than fostered the fervour of spiritual devotion ; and so deeply rooted was the conviction in their minds that instrumental music was averse to the gentle spirit of piety, that its exclusion from the ceremonies of the Church con-

tinued for a period of near twelve hundred years until the majestic and solemn tones of the organ, a comparatively modern instrument, first suggested to the clergy the propriety of admitting it into their temples as a splendid accompaniment to the human voice. But however the use of instruments might have been denied in choral worship, it was impossible to abolish the custom of praising God in vocal melody. This was an instinct with man, and a habit commended by God in various passages of the sacred Word. We have seen how the angels in heaven, who are designated by Job the "morning stars," and all the sons of God praised him together, and made a joyful melody when He grounded the basis of the earth, and laid the corner-stone thereof. Isaiah the Prophet had a vision of heaven, and he saw the seraphim standing round the throne of God, and heard them cry, one to another, in melodious chant: "Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of Hosts; all the earth is full of His glory." The psalms, the inspired psalms of David, are replete with invitations to the sons of man "to sing the praises of the Lord." Dear to God as were the bloody holocausts prescribed for His worship in the Mosaic Law, far dearer and more pleasing was sacred song than the most odorous incense that ever ascended from the sacrificial altar. "I will not accept," He says, "calves out of thy house. nor he goats out of thy flock. Shall I eat the flesh of bullocks, or shall I drink the blood of goats? Offer to God the sacrifice of praise." And from the New Testament also we gather evidences of pleasure afforded to God by the vocal chanting of His praises. When the Blessed Virgin came to visit her holy cousin, St. Elizabeth, the joy of the latter was such that the infant precursor leaped in her womb, and, inspired by God, she cried out in a loud voice to the Virgin:—"Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." In reply to which Mary bursts forth into that well-known delightful canticle—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." On that occasion also Zachary, the father of the future Baptist, was filled with the Holy Ghost, and he prophesied—that is to say, he sang—for sacred song is repeatedly designated prophecy in the sacred Scriptures—he sang the canticle known as the "Benedictus," "Blessed is the Lord the God of Israel, because he hath visited and

wrought the redemption of his people." Following the narrative of St. Luke, we find that sacred music heralded in the birth of the Redeemer; for "suddenly there was with the angel," that pointed out the way to the shepherds, a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying:—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." The holy Simeon, receiving the infant in his arms, yielded to the natural emotion of his bosom, and sang the canticle, "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace, for my eyes have seen my salvation." With song and tuneful praise was the Son of God ushered into Jerusalem by the inconstant people of that city; for as he passed along, "Hosannas to the Son of David" filled the air; and as Jesus Himself never failed to illustrate in His conduct the teaching of His word, we find that He resorted to sacred song in the darkest hour of His misery, as a solace to His chastened spirit. Previous to His exit from the supper room, and His advent to the garden-scene of His sorrows, He and His Apostles chanted a hymn to the eternal Father. "And a hymn being said," says the Evangelist, they went out into Mount Olivet." Such and so many are the various evidences of the pleasure with which God hears the tuneful celebrations of His praises by the children of men.

It would be tedious, and, indeed, unnecessary to quote for you proofs of the repute in which sacred music was held by the Apostles and their successors, by the Fathers of the Church, and other saints, as a means of enhancing the glory of God. It is recorded in Scripture that the gift of psalmody, like the gifts of prophecy and tongues, was supernaturally communicated by the Holy Spirit amongst the first Christians, and this fact alone should be testimony sufficient to show the holiness of the practice, and its importance to the early Christian cause. The early Fathers, such as Basil, Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, directed all the vast powers of their minds to the improvement and diffusion of sacred chant; and such was the zeal with which the early Christians cultivated the practice of religious song, that they assembled, not for a half hour every week, like the Christians of modern times to the chanting of vespers, but they met daily in their churches, and chanted the whole morning, and often-

times the midnight office. And the emotions of their souls, and the fervour of their devotions, excited by those heavenly sounds, may be summed up in the words of St. Augustine, referring to his own sensations under the same cause:—"How much have I wept," he says, "O Lord, on hearing Thy hymns and canticles, deeply moved by the sweet-sounding voices of Thy Churches. These sweet voices flowed through my ears, and Thy truth streamed into my heart, effervescing in pious affections and desires, till my tears began to flow, and it was well with me." Thus on through the slowly revolving lapse of eighteen hundred years, the Church never wearying in her zeal, never faltering in her progress, whether buried in the catacombs, or flourishing on the broad face of the universal earth, has preserved in her temples the pious custom of chanting in melodious strains the praises of her God; and whatever art can furnish or wealth procure for the more successful attainment of that object she presses into her service, provided by such exertions she may the better proclaim the glory of her Lord, and promote the sanctification of her children.

II. But let no one imagine that music as such is acceptable to God; melodious sounds are pleasing only to the senses of corporeal beings, but God is a spirit without a body, and therefore derives no pleasure from the sounds of sensible things. God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. The Jews of old fancied that the odorous savour of bloody sacrifices gave pleasure to God—they fancied so, because they were a materially-minded, coarse-thinking people—they could not conceive God otherwise than as a being subject, like themselves, to the influences of material sensible things. We would err like the Jews if we imagined that mere sounds delighted God, to whom even the holocausts of the Mosaic law were unacceptable in comparison to offerings of praise. Sacred music is only a means to an end. God derives no pleasure from the means—it is He supplies it—He looks for the end—He has so made the soul of man, that what we call music exercises over it a mysterious and manifold influence, awakening, according to its multiform power, the noblest or the most ignoble passions. No feeling of the soul is unsusceptible of the influence of that mysterious agent—it fortifies the weak, it unnerves the strong—it arouses the

soul to anger, or melts it into tears of pity—it now depresses to sorrow, and now exalts to joy—it warms with love, it chills with fear—it inspires with confidence—it is the sublimest vehicle of prayer—the noblest expression of homage, praise and adoration to the Most High. Sacred music is pleasing to God, because it excites in the souls of men feelings which are the sweetest and truest music to His ear—those feelings, namely, which harmonize with the spirit of His teaching and His law. It is not with the lips alone we should sing to God, but so to speak, with every vibration of our souls—we should sing according to the meaning of St. Paul when he said, “I will sing with the spirit, I will also sing with the understanding.” This is the singing which pleases God, and not the melody in which the heart and soul have no part. “Be ye filled,” writes the same Apostle, “Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father.” There is in nature a music delightful or terrible to the ear of man, but which is pleasing to God, not because it is a delightful or terrible sound, but because it is the obedient work of His hands. Thus it is sweet in the sunshine of summer to hear the rippling music of the stream as it hastens on its way to the ocean—the music is charming to the ear of man; but far more charming to the Great Creator is it to behold that stream pursue, in obedience to His law, its unerring course from the dawn of creation to the dark hour of the world’s destruction. It is sweet to hear the breeze making music through the leaves of the forest, filling the mind with sombre thoughts—thoughts grave and holy, befitting the soul in that cathedral of nature; it is terrible in the dread darkness of night to hear that breeze swell to the loud-sounding, horror-striking cadence of a storm, falling on the soul of man in its awful music, like the voice of an angry, an avenging God, yet to God that sound has no terror—the obedient air rushes to do His Divine pleasure—to execute His Almighty will—whether to fill the vacuum created by an over-heated atmosphere, or in its wrathful blast to bring destruction amongst the dwellings of sinful men—proving that “there is no other besides Him, and that there is none strong as

our God." Sweet is the music of birds—terrible the music of thunder, and yet to God they bring neither pleasure nor awe, except inasmuch as they give pleasure by fulfilling His law, the one by gladdening the heart of man—the other by awakening in man the recollection of the God whom he has offended, and the foreshadowing of the God who is to judge him in the clouds of Heaven hereafter. There is in the roaring billows of the ocean a wild terrific music which, despite their terror, has yet a something pleasing to the soul, although they drown the shrieks of shipwrecked men, the victims of their fury; yes there is music here, but far more delightful in the ear of God is the chord struck by the obedient billows of the deep, rolling in unison with the universal harmony of nature.

Thus also, melodies either of praise or love chanted by man may give pleasure to his own ear, but unless they tend to make him obey the laws of his Creator, and act in harmony with all the other works of God—unless they enkindle in his heart the sacred fire of charity, they are in the ears of God but as the "sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal;" man, as I have said, was made to give glory to God—that glory he gives by acting in obedience to the laws of his Creator; all other created things obey the commands of God; His laws have not been disturbed, without His will from the beginning down to the present hour; the grain of dust that floats in the air does so in obedience to His Divine law. This obedience of created beings to the ordinance of God is what I call the universal harmony of nature. Of all created beings in this visible universe, man is by far the noblest—he is made to the image and likeness of God; all things perish, but He is immortal—all things are material, insensible, or unthinking; man is spiritual, intellectual, rational—his intelligence is, as it were, a ray or emanation of the Divine wisdom itself—he is made for the eternal enjoyment of God: and yet, alas! notwithstanding those sublime attributes with which God has graciously endowed him, in this universal harmony of nature, he is the only being who strikes a discordant note—he is the only creature who resists the laws of God—the only creature who audaciously lifts his hand against Heaven, and cries to the Lord, "I will not serve." The noblest becomes the basest—the most honoured becomes the most degraded, and yet base and degraded as he is,

he is still the best beloved being of God, throughout the vast range of universal creation. It is the highest duty of man to obey the laws of God, or if he should wander from that obedience, to return to it at once, as the only haven of salvation. Amongst the many aids which win man back to the true path once forsaken, sacred music is not the least efficacious. It appeals to all the finer feelings of the soul which have not succumbed beneath the disastrous influences of sin; and if there be left a sigh in his heart, or a tear that may bedew his eye, that sigh and that tear are sure to be evoked by the all-searching genius of sacred song. My brethren, I have done. If I have taught you a means by which you may, in future, worship God, not only by a more beautiful ceremonial than heretofore, but by a warmer glow of the spirit and a deeper sense of the truth, I am amply repaid for any pains I may have taken in addressing you. How can I better conclude than by praying that, having sung in this life the praises of God, and exalting the wonders of His work, we may be worthy hereafter to "sing the mercies of the Lord for ever."

"Praise then the Lord in His holy places: praise ye Him in the firmament of His power: praise ye Him for His mighty acts: praise ye Him according to the multitude of His greatness: praise Him with the sound of trumpet: praise Him with psaltery and harp: praise Him with timbrel and choir: praise Him with strings and organs; praise Him on high-sounding cymbals: praise Him on cymbals of joy: let every spirit praise the Lord." Alleluia.

SERMON

ON THE PROFESSION OF A NUN.

“Hearken, O daughter, and see : and incline thine ear and forget thy people and thy father’s house, and the king shall greatly admire thy beauty, for he is the Lord thy God.”—Ps. xlv. 12.

DEARLY BELOVED SISTER,—On this day—certainly the most important of your life—when after the most most mature deliberations you have consecrated for the rest of your days your whole being to the service of God, it is of advantage to you that you should hear some words, under the auspices of religion, that may strengthen you for the accomplishment of the work you have so nobly begun. Into the retreat which you have chosen for your future years you will carry all the infirmity of your nature, and for you, as well as for us in the world, life will be ever a warfare. It is well, then, that you should have ever before your eyes a model which may show you not only the possibility of proceeding in your adopted course, but which may also illustrate the ease with which all its difficulties can be surmounted. When we undertake some new and previously unattempted task, we are apt to lose courage, and sometimes to despair of success ; but when we try what some other wayfarer on life’s journey has ventured and achieved, we are stimulated by his example, and go on bravely to the end. Thus I would propose to you, dear sister, the life and character of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as the great standard which you should follow ; for she is the brightest model of innocence, self-sacrifice, and religious consecration ever presented by God to an admiring world. I do not wish you to imagine that in following this standard you can ever attain to anything like the purity and holiness of Mary, for none other, save her, ever was or will be “full of grace.” But by imitating her virtues, you can arrive at a height of sanctity corresponding

to the capacity of your nature, and the designs of God ; and thus you can fulfil the end of your creation. She is especially the model for those of her sex who have left the world, and devoted themselves entirely to the service of God ; for her life was the type on which the Church founded the religious profession. And there is an incident in her history that foreshadows with peculiar aptness the ceremony of this day, in which you have been the principal actress—I allude to her presentation in the temple, one of the most important events in that all-glorious life, when she made of herself a holocaust of love and adoration to the Most High, and consecrated to His service every energy of her body, every faculty of her mind, and every aspiration of her sinless soul.

To this remarkable event, then, dear sister, I would direct your particular attention to-day, as in it you will find a perfect illustration of your own position, and from it you will draw much consolation, hope, and encouragement for your future career.

Although there is not on record any scriptural evidence of the presentation of Mary in the Temple, the fact of that presentation having been duly and religiously made is placed beyond dispute by a well-grounded tradition that has ever existed in the Church. Joachim and Anna, the parents of the youthful virgin, were fast declining into the vale of years, and naturally enjoyed the consoling hope that their beloved child would be to them the sweetest solace in the evening of their earthly pilgrimage. But Mary, although very young, had far different views. She concealed the idea of consecrating her virginity to God, and dwelling all her days in the holy temple of the Lord. We may well suppose her crying out in the words of the Psalmist—"One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after : that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may see the delight of the Lord, and may visit His temple." Nor was this a mere childish desire on the part of Mary, for, although only in the first blush of childhood, little advanced indeed beyond the age of merest infancy, yet the powers of her mind far exceeded in vigour and maturity the scope allotted to the generality of the children of men. Altogether free from the taint of original sin, which obscures the intellect and weakens the will, her soul was gifted with the glo-

rious endowment of the reasoning faculty at a very early age, and, even while the hearts of her fellow-children were but just budding into life, Mary's has already the full-blown "Mystical Rose," blooming for God, and emitting the sweet odour of sanctity for Him. A voice rang in her infant ears—it was the voice of God, saying—"Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear, and forget thy people, and thy father's house, and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty, for He is the Lord thy God." Quickly responsive to the celestial call, the beautiful child arose, and imparted to her beloved parents the mandate of Heaven. To worldly-minded parents, this decree of separation might be a source of bitterness and regret. Not so was it with the sainted Joachim and Anna. Their nature indeed may have been tempted to repine, and some few human tears may have been shed at parting—for the parting came soon, very soon, just as the youthful virgin had arrived at the most interesting period of existence—the happy days of innocent childhood—the helpless period, too, when a mother's love and a father's care were still needed to guide her tottering footsteps, and direct her in her first timid flight from her humble home.

Joyfully, according with the will of heaven, her parents accompanied the virgin to the temple to offer, as it were, the precious victim before the throne of the Most High. Oh! never since the days of Abel or of Abraham was any nobler sacrifice offered to the Lord, or one more worthy of His acceptance, than this. The sacrifice of the youthful Virgin was a sacrifice without a shadow of reserve. She offers herself wholly and entirely and for ever to her God. Before the temptations of the world or the flesh have time to mar her progress in virtue: before sin has a moment's opportunity to tarnish her spotless soul, she consecrates herself for her whole life to her Maker. If there be joy in Heaven for one sinner doing penance, oh! what must have been the joy and exultation of the whole court of Heaven in contemplating, not the conversion of a sinner, but the dedication to the Lord of a soul brighter, purer, and more privileged than that of the most glorious angel that worshipped before His eternal throne. With what complacency must God have looked upon that fair being as she knelt before His tabernacle in all the loveliness, innocence and simplicity of childhood, and with what a rich

and abundant blessing must He have ratified His acceptance of this, the most pleasing gift ever offered to His service: Mary sacrifices for God all her hopes and prospects of worldly prosperity, and by her vow of virginity cuts herself off from the noblest and most cherished ambition of the maidens of Judea, the ambition of becoming the mother of the Messiah. On the day of her presentation she places herself in a state of dependence and subjection to the ministers of the temple for all the days of her life, in order to consecrate her will and her heart to that Holy Spirit which was henceforward to replenish her soul for ever, and was to make her a subject for the rarest and most ennobling operations of His grace. On that day Mary laid the foundations of the order of virginity and religious consecration. On that day she exhibited to all the maidens of futurity the model of a life altogether angelical; so that those who follow in her footsteps sanctify the earth, fill heaven with souls, and become victims consecrated to Jesus—the spouse of virgins, under the auspices of her, the incomparable patroness and queen of virginity. Oh! what grace, what sanctity, what religion inflamed the heart of Mary at the moment of this consecration; what a contempt of the world and its pleasures, what love for God; what humility; what obedience; what purity; what a hunger and thirst for the perfection to which she was called by the voice of her Creator! But oh! what joy too must have filled her loving heart at the moment of this most close and happy union with her God, the author of every joy, the dispenser of every consolation: her soul was to be henceforward refreshed and exhilarated with delicious drafts of His holy grace, and to overflow with delights of heavenly contemplation. Here, in the depth of solitude, she was destined to feel more entrancing rapture than all the so-called pleasures of the world could possibly confer, for “Better, O Lord,” says the Psalmist, “is one day in Thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners.”

But Mary's response to the Divine vocation was no less prompt than her fidelity to grace was devoted and persevering. Illumined by the light of heaven, she constantly recognized in the temple the Lord of the temple, and lived and moved in His holy presence, enriched with all the

purest grace of the soul in childhood, without any of its weaknesses; at that early age her piety far surpassed the most exalted perfections ever attained by the greatest of the saints of God. While devoting herself in those tender years to the service of God's material temple, she gradually grew in grace and purity to be herself no unworthy temple for His Most Adorable Divinity. In that sanctuary God alone filled her soul, and satisfied every yearning of her tender heart—her prayers for ever ascended like a sweet odour before His eternal Throne—all her actions had Him for their beginning and end: elevated above the influence of sensible ceremonies, she adored Him with a devotion eminently spiritual; in worldly occupations and in the duties of charity, while using her senses from necessity, and not for pleasure, her union with God was never interrupted for an instant—her soul, freed from the tumults of passion listened in secret to the whispering voice of her Creator, and imbibed the light of His holy grace—she lived beneath the ever-watchful eye of God's sovereign Majesty. Her very slumber was a species of sacred repose, that suspended not for a moment the application of her soul to heavenly contemplation, while creatures, so far from dissipating her thoughts, only served to awaken her spiritual recollections, as effects remind us of the cause, and as the portrait recalls the familiar features of the original. Such was Mary from the moment of her presentation in the temple.

And now, my dear sister, the great question for you to consider on this day is, what lesson are you to learn from the consideration of this remarkable event in the life of Mary? I answer that, since you have, like Mary, consecrated all the future days of your life to the special love and service of God, you should, in imitation of Mary, observe the terms of this consecration with the most ardent devotion, and the most unflinching perseverance. Like her, you have offered yourself as a gift to God; like her you have renounced the world, and all its pleasures—all its honours, and all its vanities, that "you may see the delight of the Lord, and may visit His temple." Like her, you have knelt before the altar of God in the flower of your youth, and devoted to Him for ever all the energies of your body, and all the faculties of your soul; and God and His holy angels have looked with

complacency on the generosity of your sacrifice, and your renunciation of earth has been accepted by Him, and recorded in the eternal archives of Heaven.

Oh! see what and how great is your obligation to love and serve God with all your heart and with all your soul. Yours must be no ordinary piety, for you are no ordinary Christian; you have renounced the world: take care that nothing of the world remains in your heart or your affections. No longer "of earth, earthy," you are now a child of God, and your thought and aspirations ought to be of "Heaven, heavenly." Every fault of yours is seen magnified in Heaven, as through a microscope: but be not afraid, for, as you have been generous with God, He, who will be in no one's debt, will be generous with you in return a thousandfold. He will never forget the magnanimous spirit in which you have this day presented yourself to him; and the unhesitating decisiveness with which you deprived yourself of that liberty so cherished by the daughters of man, in order that you may become the slave and the bondswoman of Christ. Your virtues, no doubt, must be of a very exalted character; but the amount of grace allotted to you far exceeds that meted out to the generality of Christians, and the rewards which await you shall far surpass the glory that is reserved for the common children of the Church; for, surely, those holy virgins who emulate on earth the virtues of Mary cannot be far removed in Heaven from the glory and majesty of the Queen of Virgins. Even in this world, all that man can attain—and much more than is attainable—you can acquire and enjoy within these convent walls. The children of men are unceasingly employed in the pursuit of pleasure; but as they search for it only in the world, their pursuit, alas! is vain: their hopes are for ever crossed, and their minds are for ever miserable. Sometimes in the race they come up, as they fancy, with the delightful object of their pursuit, and fired with ecstasy by the contemplation of its charms, they quicken their pace; they approach nearer and nearer to the enchanting vision—they stretch out their hands to seize it—but oh! it is only a vision—a bodiless phantom, an *ignis-fatuus*. It eludes their grasp, and leaves them weary and sad, the victims of disappointment and disgust. Not so with you; you have found out the right road to happiness, and within your sanctuary is

found a peace and serenity of soul, which all the wealth of kingdoms could not purchase. Worldlings are wont to decry conventual institutions as abodes of gloom, and retreats where misery and dejection dwell. With them the convent is a prison, and the recluse a miserable captive ever despondingly brooding over her unhappy fate, and sighing for the freedom and gaiety of the gladsome world without. But they know not that the soul of that captive soars beyond the cloister bars, and mounts to the very throne of God, holding perpetual communion with Him, and His holy angels. They paint the world as a bright sea, on which the sun is ever shining, and the sparkling waves are ever dancing around the smooth path of the merry voyager; but, alas! they tell you not that the sun goes down, and that the storms arise, and that the sparkling waves become billows; they speak not of the bristling rocks, and the darksome caves, and the miserable wrecks—the struggle for life and the death-shriek of the drowning mariner. They tell of happy homes, and joyous faces—of social mirth, and of merry evenings; but oh! not a word do they speak of the homes made desolate by disease and death—not a word of the cheeks made pale by care, and by hunger—not a word of the breaking hearts, and the aching pulse—not a word of the scalding tears that flow when friends are parting, never again to look on each other's faces. They speak of wedded bliss, and the joys of motherhood; but, oh! what do they say of the sad vigils which the lonely wife must keep, while her wedded partner revels in the haunts of drunkenness and depravity—what do they say of the mother's anxiety for the welfare of her children, and of the tender hearts broken by the ingratitude, by the errors, or by the loss of those whom they loved more dearly than their own lives? Oh! dear sister, you have done well, very well, to renounce this sinful, sorrowful world. The children of the world are the real captives, pining beneath the chains and manacles of sin and passion, while you exult in all the "holy liberty of the children of God."

Proceed, therefore, in your course, for you have chosen the better part, and as sure as you are a faithful imitator of Mary, so surely shall you be a sharer of her glory in Heaven, through all the ages of eternity.

But it was not for the selfish pleasures of this holy re-

treat that you have come hither ; it was not that you might be freed from the evils of the world, and that you might revel in the ecstasies of religion ; it was not that you might escape the storms of life, and anchor here in the security of indolence and repose. No ; for this motive might vitiate the sacrifice you have made, and God, who seeks the heart alone, would reject it. You have come hither because you love God ; because you feel that He has called you hither ; because you will do more for Him here than you would do abroad. You have come, not to repose, but to labour ; not to do your own will, but the will of Him who has this day made you especially His own. You have heard His voice in your ear and in your heart, inviting you to become His child, and you have not hesitated to come. You have never once looked back. “Hearken, O daughter, and see, and forget thy people and thy father’s house, and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty, for He is the Lord thy God.” Oh ! the glory of our religion, that every day presents to our eyes so many miracles of grace, fortifying weak mortals with the strength of giants, clothes tender woman in a panoply of might, so that her worth is estimated by more than all the treasures of earth, “Who shall find a valiant woman ? Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her.” Proceed, then, dear sister, in your hallowed course—follow the blessed light of heaven that illumines your pathway. Mary is looking down on you this moment from the heights of Heaven, and in you she is well pleased. Could you but behold the gentle eyes of that tenderest and sweetest of mothers, how much would the fervour of your devotions be intensified, and the strength of your resolutions increased ! May she be your powerful mediatrix before the eternal Throne ; that acting all your life with the docility and innocence of a child, you may adorn your soul with those beautifying graces which may make you worthy to be eternally saved by your Eternal Father, the King who shall desire thy beauty, thy Lord and thy God.

SERMON.

ALL SAINTS' DAY.

“God is wonderful in His Saints.” Psalm lxxvii. 36.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—There is scarcely a day in the year on which the Church does not commemorate the virtues, celebrate the glories, and invoke the intercession of some Saint of God. But on this day, with one voice of universal jubilee, she sings the praises of the whole sainted host—of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of the martyrs, confessors, and virgins—who fought the good fight upon earth, and have won the crown of eternal glory in Heaven. The days of the year being so few, when compared with the catalogue of the glorified, the Church celebrates this one, grand, comprehensive feast that no Saint may be deprived of the honour which is his due; or be left unsolicited for those prayers by which he may assist mankind in the work of salvation. That the Church, in the celebration of this solemnity, acts with characteristic, that is, consummate wisdom, no Christian is presumed to doubt; but for the strengthening of our faith, as well as the enlightenment of our understanding, it is well that we should know the motives by which she is influenced in establishing festivals for the honour of the Saints. One motive, and the strongest, is, that thus she may give glory to God: for, in the conquest achieved by the Saints over the world, the flesh, and the devil, is manifested the invincible power of Divine grace by which so great a triumph was accomplished. The Saint was human and weak, but in the hands of God he became a tower of strength—he did all things in Him who fortified him. God was the General, and the Saint was the soldier—the victory was the victory of grace; the glory was the glory of the Almighty. Well

has the psalmist thus exclaimed, "*Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis,*" "God is wonderful in His Saints."

Again, the Church celebrates the memory of the Saint because he *was* a valiant soldier, a faithful servant of the Most High, and merits praise for his achievements in the battle with God's enemies. Will the world—which erects imperishable monuments to valour, to genius, to worth; which venerates the most trifling relics of those whom its votaries call great; which perpetuates in bronze and marble, and immortalizes in music and song, the mighty ones of the earth—deny its homage to the soldiers and servants of that God who made the earth, and who, after lives of insuperable heroism, reign with Him in unfading glory? God Himself has honoured the Saints—during their lives He gave them the power to arrest unerring nature in her course; to call the living water from the solid rock; to stay the sun in his mid-heaven career; to pass unscathed through the burning fire; to remove mountains; to raise the dead to life. Will the world refuse to honour those, whom the world's Creator has so singularly honoured?

Another motive which directs the Church in commemorating the glories of the Saints is, that by so doing, she may hold them up as models for imitation to her children still on earth, to show the possibility not only of virtue but of heroism, and to entice to the practice of it by proposing the contemplation of its rewards; and the last motive of all is, that she may procure for us with God the powerful intercession of those His chosen servants whom He honours so much, and whose entreaties, now that they are glorified, He hears with delight, and heeds with the accordance of His benignity, His mercy, and His love.

On this day, then, the Church honours God in all His Saints. She celebrates the triumphs of His grace through all time in their labours, their sufferings, and death—in the wisdom of their teaching, in the sublimity of their ambition, in their unconquerable fidelity, in their undying love for Him. She honours them all to-day with one shout of praise and benediction. She holds them up to her children as a galaxy of heroic virtue, to guide them through this valley of tears. She implores them to join their voices together in prayer at the Throne of the All-merciful, that He may give grace and happiness to all mankind. "Let us," then, in the language of the liturgy of

this day, "let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating this festive day in honour of all the Saints, in whose solemnity the angels rejoice, and give glory to the Son of God."

Notwithstanding the reasonableness of the Church in appointing festivals in honour of the Saints, there are many who style themselves Christians, and yet who regard, some with indifference, and many with contempt—those great servants of God. They describe the Saints as men of feeble intellects, carried away into absurd excesses by a spirit of fanaticism; foolishly denying themselves the legitimate pleasures of life; mean and vulgar in their tastes and habits; ignorant and unlettered: in a word, not to be compared for a moment to the humblest of those whose names swell the record of the world's greatness.

This is a question, my Brethren, which can be examined with great spiritual profit: and I am prepared to prove, by the very arguments of worldlings themselves, that the humblest Saint in heaven was a greater man than the proudest warrior, philosopher, statesman, or philanthropist, before whose memory the world bows down in most respectful homage. How shall we discover the truth in this investigation? What are the marks and tokens of true greatness? The world answers, and we must agree with the world, that he alone is truly great—1st, whose conceptions are sublime, and whose ambition soars above the common aspirations of mankind; 2ndly, who is a being of indomitable courage; and, 3rdly, who performs great and wonderful deeds during his stay upon this earth. Now, let us see whether, according to this triple standard, the Church or the world has produced the greater heroes.

And first, with regard to the mark of lofty views and sublime conceptions—what are the views and conceptions of the worldly great? What is the proudest ambition of the world's heroes? The noblest, if indeed it be noble, which any seek, is to enjoy power and fame during life, and to have their memories honoured by a long posterity. That power and fame they strive for, some by force of arms—by desolating whole countries, and destroying innocent people; by acquiring vast dominions, and accumulating countless treasures—by robbing and reducing to slavery millions of their fellow-men: contented themselves to die in the very summer-time of life, provided it be in the noontide of their glory. The readers of the world's history admire the grand

conceptions of an Alexander, and the lofty ambition that impelled him to lay one world waste, and sigh for another which he might conquer. What, though he was struck down by death, in the very bloom of his manhood, and wrenched, like a sapling, for ever from the earth! Fame swells her canticles to a Cæsar, in the insolence of his pride, traversing Europe like a destroying angel, bringing home to grace the capital of the world the richest spoils of kingdoms! What, though as the imperial diadem was about to settle on his forehead, he was slaughtered, even by his friends, on the very spot from which he aspired to rule the nations of the earth! But there is a greatness of conception praised by worldlings, besides that of warriors. They laud the aspiring genius of the scientific philosopher, whose inquisitive mind at one time pierces the depths of the earth, and at another presumes to describe the motions and properties of the stars of heaven; though, at the end of a long and studious life, this profound thinker confesses himself a very child on the ocean-shore of knowledge; and though his midnight and solitary lucubrations had only for their end the acquisition of a name to be transmitted to posterity! The statesman's ambition is for the power to rule the minds and control the actions of his fellow-men—but his passion is not for the welfare of mankind, but for the aggrandizement of self. The philanthropist loves his kind, but, alas! his motives are not pure; philanthropy is the false coin of charity; self-love is at the bottom of his devotions; were he disinterested he would be a saint; but vanity is his besetting sin; he must be content with the vain homage of a sinful world. Come forth, ye saints of God, and let us see how stand your sublime views, compared with the views of the great ones of the world: ye warriors, who would usurp the dominion and sway of nations, alas! how wretched your ambition! The Saints despised the world; they would not have accepted the sceptre of all the united kingdoms of the earth; for they knew too well how transient was the splendour, how false the grandeur, how unreal the happiness of the despot! What you sighed for, as grand and glorious, they disregarded as mean and contemptible. Here below they saw only sorrow and tears, perpetual change, and perishable goods; their thoughts were for a land of joy and gladness, a land of eternal beauty; their aspirations were for thee of

which such "glorious things are said, oh! City of God!" and there they reign, and shall reign for ever; while you, unhappy wretches, contented to bask for an hour in the glare of your own self-complacency, are excluded for ever from power, from kingdom, and from glory. What if posterity honour your memory—if columns defying time proclaim your greatness—if the poet, the painter, the sculptor, transmit through ages the lineaments of your countenances, and the magnificence of your conceptions! your eyes are not pleased, for they are now sightless, and mingled with the dust; the chant of their praises can give no joy to your ears, for, alas! no sound can echo through the silent chambers of the grave.

The great thinkers and philosophers of this world have racked their brains to discover the nature of the Deity—of the universe—of man—of the dim past, and the still more mysterious future. When not submitting to Revelation, into what extravagances have they roamed; what various theories have they not broached; how many strange systems have they not formed! Some have limited the power even of the Omnipotent! Some have denied His being altogether; some believed in nothing. All this has been only an attempt, by reasoning, to disprove the existence of an avenging God, and to clear the road for a free indulgence of the passions, by removing the apprehension of punishment. Where here is sublimity of conception? While your philosophers have denied that the body, once corrupted in the grave, could ever rise to immortality! while they thus consoled themselves with the horrible solace of annihilation, the Saints, confiding in the Almighty power of God, and in the inexhaustible merits of His Divine Son, knew that, as with the grains of seed placed in the earth, corruption must precede incorruption; and, instead of looking forward to annihilation as their hope, their language and their aspirations were those of the holy patriarch Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God; when I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. This hope is laid up in my bosom."

The highest ambition, then, of worldlings, is altogether confined to earth—to live as long as possible—to enjoy the world's goods in profusion—to have power, honour, and

fame, to be praised by their fellow-men during life—then to die, and to be spoken of in terms of approbation, through all posterity. But the ambition of the Saints is to live as long as God wills—to take the world's goods in stint or abundance, as it pleases the Great Giver—to have the power to thank and praise Him—the honour to be His servant—no fame, no praise ; for these belong to God—then to die, and to be happy with that God, for all eternity. The world shall have passed away, and all its glory—its great ones shall be forgotten ; they shall have had their reward—fame in the world through the centuries called time, which now appears as a speck on the horizon of eternity ; while eternity itself stretches out before their vision—a shoreless ocean—an ocean of unfathomable blessings, where all is light, and truth, and knowledge, and peace, and joy for ever. Then let it not be said that the Saints lacked the character of lofty ambition, to prove their greatness above the greatness of the world.

II. But let us see whether, on the second ground, namely, indomitable courage, they can equally claim superior admiration. I do not speak of that courage which is displayed on the field of battle—for that, after all, is a vulgar courage, often evoked by the excitement of the hour, by the apprehension of disgrace, by the stimulus of common example—in fact a courage which is, so to speak, professional, the result of teaching and practice. Nevertheless, even in this aspect of courage, the Saints may compete with the bravest of the brave. Who so intrepid in war as Josue, Gideon, David, and the valiant Machabees, who shed their blood to the last drop for their country, and their religion. In the new dispensation, the soldiers of Christ have accomplished more peaceful victories, for such was the desire of their Master, the Prince of Peace. Yet, when need demanded it, a sainted Monarch of France, King Louis IX., donned his armour against the infidels, and set as brilliant an example of courage and generalship to warriors, as he did of humility and fervour to the children of the Church.

The world, prone to things of earth, is unwilling to try the combat for eternal life, and denounces those who have the courage to attempt it, as fools and cowards. And yet we are assured by God that “the Kingdom of Heaven is taken by violence, and the violent bear it away.” To be

violent we must be courageous, and such were the Saints. They had the courage to sell their possessions, if they had them, like Francis of Assisi, and give all to the poor for the sake of God—they emptied themselves for their Master's sake, as He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave for them. They left their palatial halls, their high-born associates, their sumptuous banquets, for rocks and caves, and howling wildernesses, for the company of wild beasts, for the scanty fare of the desert, the water from the stream, and the berries from the bramble. They did it for God. Ah! that was courage, while cowardice fled to the great ones of the world, who gratified every passion of nature, and satiated every corrupt appetite of the flesh. But there is a courage still greater than this, and yet which is despised by the world as pusillanimity. It is the courage by which a man bows submissively to insult and vituperation, fearless of the taunts and reproaches of his fellow-man: the courage by which one bears the yoke of Christ, humbles himself under the chastening hand of God, is calumniated and repines not—is mocked, and smiles complacently on the mocker. Such too was the courage of the Saints; they despised the taunts, as they contemned the applause of the world. They followed the dictates of their own consciences, careless of the world's verdict, knowing it was the Lord who should judge them. Behold the Apostles of Christ, who, when they were scourged before a Council of the Jews, "went from the presence of the Council rejoicing, because they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the Name of Jesus." Saul of Tarsus knew not this magnanimity, in the days of his worldly greatness: but Paul, the converted, becomes the humblest, and thus the bravest of men; "We are made a spectacle," he says of himself, "to the world, to angels, and to men." "We have become the refuse of this world—the off-scouring of all men until now." This is a courage of which the world can form no conception, and which it therefore pretends to despise: a courage which springs from a thorough knowledge of what is truly great and noble, which has triumphed over the contemptible meanness of corrupt nature, and trampled on human pride by the power of Him whose choicest glories are the glories of the Cross.

But we will be told that many great men, and even

women, of this world, have shown great fortitude in the hour of danger, and have evinced a degree of magnanimity under the most trying circumstances, such as demands our highest admiration and esteem. Be it so. But will that detract from the fortitude and magnanimity of the Saints? What then of the countless martyrs who have shed their blood for Christ in every age, in every clime: at every period of life, whether in the spring-time of youth, budding with hopes of a long and happy career in this world, or in the decrepitude of age, when the body most recoils from pain? What of the tender virgins, armed in constancy beyond their age or sex, who, for the preservation of their virtue, have been racked and tortured, flung to be devoured by wild beasts, cast into boiling cauldrons, or drowned in the rivers by whose banks they learned the beauty of their God, for whom they became victims? What of the youths who have been made the sport of amphitheatres, slain by the sword, or torn to pieces by lions, because they would not bend the knee to Baal? What of the daring missionaries who travelled through regions where man was even wilder than the brute, that they might bring the light of the Gospel to "nations sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death," and who have succumbed, with smiles upon their cheeks, to the cruel death which they knew to be inevitable? Ah! talk as you please of indomitable courage: but look for its highest manifestation in the blood-red pages of the Christian Martyrology. There, if courage be a test of greatness, in common justice award the palm to the Saints of God.

We now come to the third and last test of human greatness, the performance of wondrous deeds, and heroic exploits; and, according to this standard, I contend for the superiority of the Saints over worldlings, no matter how distinguished. In what have men evinced peculiar greatness above their fellows? History supplies us with the names of great law-givers, poets, orators, philosophers, conquerors, philanthropists, and civilizers. In all these departments the Saints have shone most conspicuous. Where are your Solons and Lycurguses, and their ephemeral statutes, when compared with Moses and his laws, which still subsist after three thousand years, among a people to whom they were given to an unlimited duration, and whom, by some mysterious efficacy, they band to-

gether, though scattered over the nations of the earth, blended with their fellow-men, but marked out from them by a distinctive and unmistakeable character? Amongst the poets of ancient or modern times, who has surpassed the sublimity of the Psalmist—the pathos of Jeremias—the terrific majesty of Isaiah? Other poets have sipped of the stream—those have drunk at the very fountain of Divine inspiration. In oratory, who so magnificent as Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil, Ambrose, and Chrysostom the golden-mouthed? Philosophers of Greece and Rome, behold your absurd creeds, and theories, and maxims, vanishing like pestilential vapours before the morning light of the Sermon on the Mount, and the maxims of the Crucified. Philosophers of modern times, you would bring men down to earth, to hell; the philosophy of the Saints, with unvarying wisdom, bears men up to heaven. Conquerors, what are your victories compared with the peaceful triumphs of the Saints? You ravaged countries with fire and sword, and added new dominions to your empires, which, in their turn, were desolated and appropriated by others. The twelve fishermen of Galilee, naked and unarmed, have changed the destinies of the whole world—have formed a universal society, acknowledging the same Head, obeying the same laws, working with a unanimity clearly supernatural, defying for the last eighteen hundred years, and sure to defy for ever, the powers of earth and hell, enemies from within, and enemies from without, and all that by moral force. Oh, marvel of marvels! philanthropists, amongst your beneficent ranks where can be found one Vincent de Paul? Once a slave, then an humble priest in a Parisian hospital, poor and unknown—behold the wonders he wrought. He filled all France with innumerable asylums for the sick and poor; he dispensed millions of money in charity all over the world; he established seminaries for education; he controlled the councils of the kingdom; he established the Sisters of Charity—those angels of love upon earth; he diffused more blessings amongst mankind, and established agencies which dispensed them still more abundantly, than any thousand of your so-called philanthropists that ever lived upon the earth. The Saints, in fine, have been the only great civilizers of the human race; they banished the ignorance and superstition of paganism; they dethroned

the false gods; they softened manners; they preserved and diffused the treasures of learning; they cultivated the arts and sciences; they founded Universities; they erected temples for Divine worship, such as the world had never seen. Their energies permeated into the humblest hamlets, and towns, and rural districts; they have taught mankind true happiness, and pointed out the only means by which it was attainable; they have met in return only with contempt and ingratitude; but they have gone on rejoicing, never flinching, preaching "in season and out of season," ready to bear all for Him whom they serve, provided they can only add new voices to the celestial choir to sing His glories for eternity.

Then, whether we weigh the greatness of man by sublimity of conception, by indomitable courage, or by wondrous deeds, clearly the Saints of God alone have been truly great.

Yes, and when this world shall have been destroyed by fire, and all its glories vanished, then will that greatness be made manifest to all mankind. Then, say the Sacred Scriptures, "the just shall stand with great constancy against those who afflicted them." And when the sentence of eternal happiness shall have been passed, the wicked shall exclaim, "these are they whom we held some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach we fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints; therefore we have erred."

My Brethren, need I add another word? Will you imitate the Saints of God, and be numbered hereafter among His children; or will you hold them in derision, and for a parable of reproach, and find, too late, that you have erred? You are not expected to rival the Saints, for all soldiers cannot be heroes in the battle for eternal life; but, like them, you can, at least, have your views fixed, not on this earth, but on the things of heaven. You can evince at least that courage by which the world, the flesh, and the devil are conquered and put to flight. Your deeds may not be of the highest order of valour, but they can be works fruitful of eternal life. Imitate the Saints of God, even at a distance, and you will do all that God requires at your hands. Above all things, learn, like them,

to despise the world, to rise superior to its false maxims, to act according to the safe and unerring standard of conscience, to be proud of the name of Christian, never to disgrace so noble a dignity: that thus you may be worthy hereafter to join the white-robed band that "stand before the Throne of God, where there "shall be no more hunger nor thirst; neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the Throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the Waters of Life," whereby they shall be refreshed and incbricated with delight, through all the ages of eternity.

SERMON

IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF THE MAGDALEN ASYLUM.¹

What think you? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains and goeth to seek that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, amen, I say to you, he rejoiceth more for that than for the ninety-nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of those little ones should perish. Matt. xviii.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—I appear before you this day the advocate of the Mary Magdalen Asylum, now long established in this city: an institution so called because it affords an asylum, or refuge, to those frail and unfortunate members of the human sisterhood who, having imitated Magdalen in her wanderings from virtue, seek to rival that glorious model of conversion in her return to the paths of penitence and peace. The merits of such an institution are in theory so obvious, and in practice so well proved, that its advocate must labour under a difficulty rather from the abundance than from poverty of argument. So manifest indeed are its advantages, both to the city in general, and to the unhappy recipients of its charity, that it has never failed to elicit the highest admiration, and to receive the most munificent support of the citizens of all creeds and classes. In order that it may continue to deserve that admiration, and to receive the support hitherto so generously accorded, it devolves upon me this day to plead its cause, and to uphold its excellence, in order that conviction may be awakened in those who have not yet made it a subject of consideration; and that the charitable and the good may be stimulated, if possible, to a livelier and more practical sympathy in its behalf.

In order, my Brethren, that you may fully appreciate the

¹ Preached in the Cathedral, Cork, Jan. 31, 1864.

nature and excellence of this institution, it is necessary that you should know the precise work which it undertakes to accomplish—the precise difficulty which it undertakes to surmount. For that purpose it is essential that you should be fully able to realize to yourselves the exact condition of the being whose reformation is to be wrought—from whose soul the weeds of vice are to be rooted out, and in whom virtue is to be planted anew; in a word, whose very nature is to be thoroughly and radically changed. It is, therefore, to the deplorable spectacle presented by the ruin of female virtue, that I would first invite your attention. And, in order that you may have a just conception of the nature and extent of this pitiable ruin, it is well that you should first consider attentively the state of the soul as it is beautified and adorned by chastity, before the enemy has yet directed against it his “hellish engines” of destruction.

First of all, therefore, I shall say a few words on the subject of chastity in general. Of all the virtues which adorn the human soul, the brightest and best-beloved of heaven is chastity. This virtue is beautifully conceived by St. Ambrose to derive its origin not from earth, but from heaven itself; for, as it is a virtue whose chief characteristic, or rather whose very nature, is spotless purity, it cannot possibly spring from any essence of this world, which is, alas! a world of sin and shame, wherein it is scarcely too much to say, that the demon of impurity has taken up his throne, and rules with universal sway. Chastity may well be called the virtue of the angels; and as those glorious beings are the virgins of heaven, so human virgins may well be called the angels of the earth. And, indeed, the chastity of mankind may be said to surpass in every way the purity of angels; for man is exposed to a thousand temptations, from which the angels are happily exempt by chastity; man is elevated above his own nature, while the angels can never transcend the status of theirs. The angels are pure because they are untrammelled by flesh and blood; man is pure because he conquers the passions which flesh and blood inflame. To win the prize of chastity, man must lead a life of perpetual combat and perpetual triumph: to enjoy the reputation of purity, the angels need but to repose in a sweet tranquillity, which passion cannot ruffle, nor temptation thwart. In fine, to be pure, the angels need but preserve the nobility of their nature; while man must hold an un-

ceasing struggle against the debasing corruptions of *his*. Hence, chastity has well been styled by excellence the angelic virtue ; because, by the practice of it, man is, in a certain sense, assimilated to the bright and glorious inhabitants of heaven. The Catholic Church has never ceased to admonish her children of the excellence, and to exhort them to the practice of chastity ; and so effectual have been her pious inculcations on this point, that the state of even perpetual virginity has been equally embraced by millions of human beings of either sex, from the earliest days of Christianity.

By the establishment of institutions throughout the world for the practice of perpetual virginity, the Church has done more to exalt the character of woman than was ever conceived in the wildest dreams, or executed by the loftiest genius of civilizing men. By this grand stroke she affirmed the sacredness of the principle which darkly shone through the instincts of heathenism, when it devoted to perpetual virginity the priestesses of Ceres, the vestals of the Romans, the druidesses of the Gauls, and the prophetesses of the Germans. She deprecated the established notion, that woman was a toy for man's carnal pleasure, and by elevating her above the atmosphere of gross passions, and leaving her still invested with all the attractions conferred on her by nature, vindicated for her an equal share of dignity with man, and an equal title to eternal glory.

In the old law, strange as it may appear, although chastity was highly esteemed, virginity was a fruitful subject of reproach amongst women. In the Old Testament, indeed, we find no praise of virginity—no trace of its existence. The Jewish people made it a great part of their religion to believe that by the multiplication of true believers they gave more glory to God than He could possibly receive from any amount of individual self-abnegation. Hence, with them marriage was held most sacred ; and while sterility was a great reproach in Israel, on the other hand, the fruitfulness of woman was regarded as the brightest ornament of the sex. But, with the first dawn of the new law, all this was changed. In the old law, indeed, chastity was, as I have said, highly esteemed and warmly commended ; but this esteem and those commendations fall very far short of the eulogy which that virtue has constantly received, not only from the lips of Christ and His Apostles, but from the

incessant teachings and the universal practice of the Holy Catholic Church.

The first step in this great reformation of religious sentiment was taken when Christ, the Son of God, assumed flesh in the chaste womb of a virgin. To the practice of this virtue all His tenderness was evinced. Witness His preference for the well-beloved disciple before all the other Apostles. Whenever the Sacred Scriptures speak to us of St. John, it is the disciple whom Jesus loved. And how did Jesus love him? At the Last Supper, John reclined upon His Saviour's bosom as if that Saviour wished to disclose to him the inmost secrets of His heart, and the profoundest depths of His tender love. And why this? Because, as the Fathers of the Church assure us, John had ever guarded with jealous care the spotless purity of His virgin soul. Why speak of the purity of God's Virgin Mother? The Scriptures themselves seem to exhaust the eloquence of inspiration in praising the chastity of the Virgin Mary. All that is most beautiful in the heavens, and all that enchants the vision upon earth is adduced as a type of her spotless soul. She is, "the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys." She is the "closed garden, the sealed fountain." She is the "Cedar of Lebanon, the cypress-tree of Mount Sion, the palm-tree in Cades, the rose in Jericho." She is "fair as the moon, bright as the sun; her throne is in the pillar of a cloud; she is the morning star." In conformity with the teaching of Christ and His Apostles, and in imitation of Himself and His Blessed Mother, a glorious lustre was shed around the early Church by the practice of virginity on the part of thousands of either sex, but principally on the part of women. From all ranks of society this virgin band was recruited, and it was worthy of men and angels to behold flocking beneath the stainless banner troops of youthful gentle maidens, disrobing themselves of all the glitter and pageantry of wealth and station, laying at the feet of Jesus all the pleasures and honours the world holds dear, and dedicating for ever to Him all the dazzling beauty of their persons, and every aspiration of their sinless souls. And when the royal tyrants and their bloodthirsty agents sought with fire and sword, and rack and wheel, to force those tender virgins to renounce their chastity, when every effort was made for this purpose that human passion

set on fire by hell could have suggested, how gloriously those gentle victims vanquished their destroyers, shedding the last drop of their blood—suffering to be torn limb from limb, rather than lose that purity which they had consecrated to the Eternal Bridegroom of their souls. Ah! well indeed is chastity reputed of heavenly birth, for what more noble attribute adorns the soul of woman? In the blooming garden of the Christian Church, which exhales for ever the delightful odour of sanctity, what rarer or more gorgeous flower unfolds its beauties to the Sun of Justice than this flower of chastity, refreshed by the dews of grace—nurtured by the waters of the Gospel—breathed into life by the gentle whisperings of the Holy Spirit? What virtue sheds more glory on the Church than that by which rebellious nature is tamed into submission; which summons all the other virtues, at her beck, to guard the soul in her passage to eternity; which purifies everything corrupt, converts man into an angel, and coins, out of a debased, half-brutalized creature, the noblest image of the Deity! What a virtue must that be which brought the Son of God from His Eternal Throne into the womb of a mortal mother! which alone, of all the other virtues, has the exalted privilege of “following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth;” and which shall be the watchword for the glorious meeting of Saints and Angels in heaven hereafter, never, never more to part!

Having said so much on the subject of chastity in general, let us now suppose a female adorned with that most amiable virtue. She has just arrived at the most interesting period of existence, a few degrees beyond the age of childhood. Her personal charms are every day approximating to the standard of perfect beauty—too often, alas! a fatal gift of heaven. The rose is on her cheek, and joy is in her heart. Her mind is in the palace of innocence—her body is the temple of the Holy Ghost—her soul is brighter than the morning star, for it is the image of the pure God Himself. She walks her way unsuspectingly. Life for her is painted in rainbow colours. She is ignorant of the storms, and of the clouds charged with thunder. Purity tinges her every thought with halos of celestial brightness: the chaste glances emanating from her virgin eyes bring a blush to the cheek of vice, while her accents of innocence and purity steal like strains of hea-

ven to the listener's heart. Oh! child of beauty, innocence, and grace, would that God struck pale thy blushing cheek, and dried up the fountain of thy life-blood, that thy pure soul might pass away from this world of sin and sorrow, ere thou hadst tasted the sparkling cup in whose dregs is eternal death! Her parents perchance are poor, or perhaps they die, and leave the loved one a victim to all the waves and perils of orphanage. Besides orphanage there are many other dangers to which the virtues of girlhood is exposed—there is the neglect of early education—the want of proper parental vigilance—the insinuating poison distilled from lascivious books—the association with companions whose minds are diseased with vice, and whose conversation breathes the infection of impurity. But we will suppose the subject of our consideration to be an orphan, at least to be so poor that she is forced to seek a livelihood by her industry, as happens in almost every case to those whose cause I advocate to-day. She is thus thrown upon the troublous ocean of life, a waif of frail humanity, tossed about by the billows of adversity, without prudence to check or experience to direct her. Still pure, innocent, and unsuspecting, she goes her way; her daily prayers, the utterances of a sincere heart, ascend like a sweet incense before the throne of God; the angels still recognise in that loved one a being of congenial purity; her heart is yet unsullied, and sin, with its black scroll, has not yet effaced the luminous character inscribed by grace upon her virgin soul. But, lo! the serpent lies in ambush beside her pathway—his glistening eyes shoot forth, unseen, their poisonous glances on the unthinking victim—the seducer has marked her for his prey! Cunningly he sets about his hellish work; the innocent victim is decoyed into his house, of which she becomes an inmate. He offers her the means of living; she, poor child, regards him as an agent in the hands of Providence sent to guide, to defend, and to protect her. Alas! delusive hope; slow and cool in his plans, the seducer, who cares not whether he accomplishes his fell purpose in a week, or a month, or a year, sounds the lowest depths of her character, and shapes his conduct according to all its sinuous windings. He sees she is confiding, he invites her confidence; she is affectionate, he wins her affection by kindness; he knows that youth and beauty are vain, he affects to be smitten by

her charms ; she is fond of dress, he gratifies her taste, heedless of expense ; but she is virtuous—no matter, he can assume a virtue too. Oh ! the cruel ingenuity of vice, by which a demon can be transformed into an angel of light ! He speaks to her like an oracle, on what he calls her mistaken notions of virtue ; he expatiates on the harmlessness of sin, on the unreality of hell, on the dreams of preachers, on the romances of religion ; he dwells on the strength of passions, on the weakness of nature, on the mercy of God, on the pleasures of criminal indulgence ; he bribes, entices, threatens, and entreats. But why pursue the tortuous sophistries of such diabolical villainy ? By such like insinuating arts, or, these failing, by brutal violence, he accomplishes the ruin of his victim, and wrecks the beauty, innocence, and peace of her who was before a masterpiece of God's creation, the pure temple in which, surrounded by His holy angels, He loved to dwell. Disgusted at length with his own villainy, deceived by a shadow, when he thought to grasp a substance—torn asunder by the bitterest pangs of remorse (for vice is ever its own avenger), the seducer now seeks only to remove from his sight that wretched being whose virtue and whose peace he has destroyed, and whose presence but serves constantly to remind him of his own baseness and heartless cruelty ; coldly and mercilessly he flings her back upon the world from which he decoyed her—now no longer innocent and fair, but sinful and care-worn, with blasted name and blasted hopes, pointed at with the finger of scorn ; shunned as if she breathed contagion, an object of pity to some, but of loathing and contempt to the generality of her species. Oh ! wicked, bad-hearted man, as sure as God defends the right—as sure as He has said, “*Revenge is mine, and I will repay*”—so surely, on that tremendous day when He shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge mankind, shall the record of that black sin be presented before His Eternal Throne, and cry out for vengeance, eternal vengeance, on thy devoted head. And in the twinkling of an eye, the gates of hell shall yawn beneath thy feet, and thou shalt be swallowed up into those, alas ! too real flames, to curse for ever the day when thy lascivious glance first alighted on the fair and spotless victim of thy remorseless passion. “*Do not err,*” says St. Paul, “*neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, shall possess the*

kingdom of God." What shall now become of the wretched forlorn outcast? The evidence of her guilt is revealed to the world. She seeks the refuge of the workhouse; alas! poor refuge for frail fallen virtue, where similar victims, inured to the hardness of life, suggest no remedy but the stifling of conscience, and the intoxication produced by sinful enjoyment. And is she to be lost? Ah! there is one hope still; she will arise and go to her father, for her father, or perhaps her mother, still lives, and they will not refuse a home to their child, although so wretched and degraded. Will you believe it, experience proves that in the vast majority of cases the unhappy postulant of pity is repulsed from her parents' door with anger, vituperation, and scorn? Their hearts, to be sure, are seared and embittered by the sad reflection that she, whom they loved as the apple of their eye, is now degraded and defiled; their love has been quenched by the torrent of her infamy; but, oh! they should remember that "many waters cannot extinguish true charity;" that they are now her only refuge, and that if she lose them, she is lost indeed; for, whither shall she turn for protection if the father withdraws his shielding arm—if the mother averts the bosom on which her infant head so oft reclined, and from which she drew with the food of life those seeds of virtue that are not yet quite extinguished in her soul? Oh! parents, have still some compassion for her who is not yet quite lost! God will forgive her; and will you close your hearts to the gentle appealings of mercy? God will hear her repentant cries; will you be deaf to her harrowing entreaties. Have you so soon forgotten the parable of the Prodigal Child? Have you no word of welcome for the poor trembling penitent at your door? When the good shepherd loses only one sheep, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and go to seek the one that is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, "amen I say to you, he rejoiceth more for that than for the ninety-nine that went not astray." After all this will you still be obdurate? Yes, hope, all hope is fled: piteously they turn her away as if there were pestilence in her touch; they will admit the dog to a share of their fireside, but the sinful child of their bosom they chase from their home and leave to the mercy of the rains and night winds of a wintry sky; they suffer the gentle lamb to wander away still farther from the sheepfold to

regions where barrenness spreads, and wild wolves prey. Oh! parents, heartless as the seducer of your daughter, know you not that you only consummate the guilt which he initiated? He began the work of sin, and you help to its completion. As you hardened your hearts against your child, and permitted her to wander to destruction, so when you come trembling to ask for entrance into the House of God's eternal glory, do you not fear that your Father will shut the gates of heaven in your face, and leave you to the mercy of the wolves of hell, to the horrors of eternal perdition?

Gloomy, desolate, despairing, the frail one turns from her parents' door; all hope is at length extinguished, she knows not whither to turn now; for, when parents shut out their child, how can she expect the hospitality of strangers? Nature, too, asserts her rights, and hunger pinches the forsaken one. Her heart grows hard when she thinks of the gentle teachings of the Gospel, and sees them ignored by a professing, but as it appears to her, an unbelieving, cold, uncharitable world. She is tempted to believe that God is not a God of Mercy, else why pursue her thus with misery irretrievable? Then the dark thought flashes through her mind, that it would be well to dash into that cold river and end her woes—it would be only a plunge, a suffocating gasp, no more, and all would be over. But the demon of suicide has scarcely whispered in her ear, when he of impurity crosses her path once more. Oh! shall we draw a veil over the rest? The picture is already sad enough—sadder, indeed, than human pencil can portray—sad enough to make the angels weep.

A few stages on, however, is another sad sketch in the same miserable career. A few months, or perhaps a few years more, and as we pass our streets at night our ears are assailed with blasphemies that make the flesh creep, issuing from the mouth of some strolling, half-besotted wanton. Flaunting along with lascivious carriage, she assumes the air of one who knows not sorrow; the night is cold, but she heeds it not; the street is dark and desolate, but darkness and desolation have no effect on her; they only seem to heighten the insane pleasure with which she hears her oaths and horrid imprecations ring out on the night air. It is long since she has bent her knees in prayer; she forgets the interior of the House of

God; she scoffs at religion and its dupes; blasphemy, obscenity, and drunkenness, are her wild delight; she is familiar with the cold, damp prison walls; she is acquainted with workhouse fare, but all the more greedily when released does she rush to the excesses of vice, and drown her griefs and cares in the obliviousness of intoxication. Her brow is wrinkled, hard, and shameless, but the disguise is not sufficient to prevent us from recognizing the once fair, gentle, modest girl who so often knelt like an incarnate seraph before the altar of the Lord. And is she happy now in her wild, wanton orgies? Alas! no, the canker of care is at her heart; she would barter all the world's wealth, did she possess it, for one happy hour like those she spent in childhood—the days when her father gazed on her with a father's pride, and her mother's tear of joy sparkled on the stainless cheek of her child, like the dewdrop of morning on the rose. But we must leave her to her haunts of vice, to her wretchedness, and degradation, and proceed to another part of our subject.

On a green hill-side within view of this Cathedral church arise the fair proportions of another sacred edifice—it is styled the Convent of the Sisters of Charity. You enter through the outer gate, and find the grounds laid down with scrupulous neatness and taste, while a solemn stillness pervades the holy place; you enter the building itself, and meet the members of the pious sisterhood. And who are they? They are ladies who once moved in the highest walks of life—ladies of aristocratic birth, of gentle breeding, of large fortune, of highly-cultivated minds, who, stripping off the costly trappings of pride, to which woman so passionately clings, and forsaking the hearths and homes, the love of which is so closely interwoven with our nature, put on those black, unshapely robes, and immure themselves within those walls for ever, through pure love for the Almighty. And how do they manifest this love? In denying to themselves, for God's sake, all the pleasures and honours the world holds dear—the society of the high-born, the elegant, and the learned; the whirl of the ball-room, the delights of the theatre; the enchantments of Continental scenery, the pastime of light reading; the pride received from praise; the respectable matrimonial alliance; the joys of motherhood, and the thousand other nameless pleasures so beloved by

mortal women. And for all this self-denial what do they receive? They rise at the dawn in summer, and in the darkness and cold gloom of winter, to offer their hearts as a morning sacrifice to the Lord, and to dedicate to Him all the actions of the day. They fast, and abstain, and mortify all the passions of the flesh; they instruct tender girls in the rudiments of learning, and on the nature of their duties to their Creator; they visit the sick and the poor in cabins and hovels, squalid with filth, and contaminated with disease. Where wealth and comfort reign, there the Sister of Charity turns her back; but where hearts are breaking, and cheeks grow pale and wan—in the abodes of poverty, and misery, and sin—there is she found feeding the hungry, soothing the afflicted, drying the tears of the distressed, instructing the ignorant, pouring the balm of consolation into hearts hardened, and seared, and reprobate, fortifying the last aspirings of the sinner with hope in a suffering Redeemer—turning His last glance heavenward, and attuning His last sigh into a prayer for pardon and forgiveness. And thus they work on from day to day, and from year to year, in our midst and yet unseen, until they go down into the grave, their names forgotten, and their epitaphs uninscribed; yet greater in reality, and having done more good for their species than the most exalted monarch, statesman, philosopher, or philanthropist, whose names have ever been held up by worldlings for the love and veneration of mankind.

On some day we may suppose a person seeking for admission at the convent gate; the call is answered by one of the Sisters—the gate is opened, and there stands the unhappy outcast, the history of whose ruin I have endeavoured, however faintly, to portray. Oh! my Brethren, what a contrast between the two women; on one side the pure, spotless, gentle being, who walks the earth as if she had only just come down from heaven, with the soft accents of consolation upon her lips, and the sweet smile of pity beaming in her mild, serene eyes; on the other hand, the sinful, shameless wanton who has preserved but the aspect of womanhood, while her heart has been enslaved by every passion degrading to humanity. Now, however, the tears stream down her cheeks—that heart is touched at length by God's holy grace; she has found at

last that all is vanity and affliction of spirit, save to love and serve her God, and Him alone. Like the prodigal in the Gospel, she returns to ask mercy and pardon—she comes back, like the lost sheep, to beg for admission into the sheepfold. Oh! gentle sister, do not spurn her from your door as she was spurned by the mother who bore her, “It is not the will of your Father who is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” Ah! the holy virgin remembers the tender words of her Divine Master. Tenderly she takes the hand of the wretched wanderer, heedless that it is the hand of a degraded sinner, and leads her into the sanctuary of piety and penance, where her tears may be dried, her sins effaced, and peace come back once more to her afflicted soul. The penitent is introduced to others of her sex, whose histories would be only reflections of her own—many with whom she was associated in vice, but with whom she now blends her sighs of repentance and her hymns of praise to God: she becomes an inmate of the Magdalen Asylum.

My Brethren, the Magdalen Asylum has been conducted for the last twelve years solely and entirely by the Sisters of Charity. It has been established by the donations and bequests of the charitable, and is supported by its own resources and the munificence of the public. During those twelve years it has extended its charitable protection to more than 480 females who, without it, should have perished on the streets, or in the workhouse—and what is worse, would have almost inevitably died unrepentant in the midst of their sinful career. The amount of money already expended in the establishment of this institution, and in the erection of machinery for the employment of its inmates, exceeds the large sum of £4000. The number of females at present in the Asylum is about seventy. Their time is divided between prayer, labour, and recreation. Each female has a sleeping apartment of her own, which is kept with the most scrupulous neatness, and is embellished with pictures and ornaments calculated to inspire and foster religious feelings in the occupant. They rise in the morning at six, and retire to rest at nine at night. In all their occupations, even the meanest, some sister of the community takes a share, in order, by this condescension, to sustain and encourage them in their labours, and to make them more readily

accept the performance of tasks to which refined ladies are not ashamed to stoop. They sleep an hour longer, and retire an hour earlier than the sisters themselves, so that the possibility of complaining of over-work is perfectly out of the question. Their chief occupation consists, as you are aware, in washing for the public. The machinery erected for this work is so perfect that they labour without much physical exertion, and on a principle of order and regularity calculated to impart a methodical turn to their habits, and greatly facilitating the observance of silence, which is strictly enjoined, during labour, by the rules of the House. Their meals, consisting of good substantial fare, take place at regular hours, and recreation fills up the unemployed spaces of the day. Those who are delicate are exempted from labour, and receive the professional care of an eminent physician of the city. Their liberty is in nowise affected; for the moment any one of them feels an inclination to leave, which very rarely happens, the gates are opened, and no bar placed to her departure, save the gentle remonstrance which charity or piety may suggest. Thus they lead, on the whole, a very happy life, seldom caring to see their friends or relations, whose affections they sacrificed in the world, and recognising in each other the strongest claims to mutual tenderness and love. Indeed, I am informed by the sisters, that the most striking characteristic of these poor creatures is, the depth and sincerity of their mutual affection. They love each other with all the devotion of sisters; and some instances of their self-sacrificing spirit, and their ingenuity in obliging, are touching and romantic in the extreme. They assist, console, and pray for one another; and the accession of every new penitent affords an occasion for evoking in a peculiar manner those tender kindnesses, and those gentle offices of religion. Many an example of sanctity is here presented to the eyes of God, and His angels, of which the cloister or the hermitage may well be proud; and many a soul is saved which, in the ordinary dispensations of Providence, might have gone to irretrievable perdition. So attached do they become to their adopted home, that the vast majority of them never sigh to leave it, even when the world offers them the means of procuring an honest and respectable livelihood. Many a stirring tale could the sisters tell, illustrative of this

fact. I will record only one. One day, some few years ago, the Superioress of the convent was informed that a lady, who had just arrived, was anxious to see her. The lady had sat for some time in the waiting-room, when the door was suddenly opened, and the Superioress made her appearance. The nun was struck with the beauty and elegance of her visitor. The lady was robed in attire the most fashionable, and calculated to set off to the greatest advantage the natural charms of her person. What was the astonishment of the good sister on recognising under this elegant disguise a former inmate of the Magdalen Asylum! A member of a highly respectable family, the young lady had, some years before, fallen from virtue—had run through the whole course of vice—had found refuge in the Asylum—had gone to America at the solicitations of rich friends, and was now here again! She informed the pious sister, with tears in her eyes, that, in all the gay and fashionable follies of the society in which she had been moving, she had never felt one throb of real joy, for that she knew she was a sinner, and that the gaieties of the world were not for her—that she had never tasted happiness since she had left the Magdalen Asylum, and that so great was her anxiety to return to it, that she had dreamed some weeks before in America that she had come back, and died within its walls. She now begged and entreated to be permitted to return to the Asylum, and remain there to see the realization of this happy hope. The Superioress could not but consent, and the lady, before leaving the parlour, insisted on getting a pair of scissors, and cutting off, with her own hands, the hair that flowed in rich luxuriance on her shoulders. Then, having put on the Magdalen dress, she joined the ranks of the penitents, the most earnest penitent there; but a few months only elapsed, when her cheek grew pale, and her pulse beat quick—the beautiful form was stricken in death, but the blissful dream was at length fulfilled.

There is an impression abroad that this institutio self-supporting and, therefore, needs no further the practical sympathy of the public. This impression is, I believe, erroneous; but whether it be erroneous or not, is a matter of very little moment. I stand here to-day, not so much for the purpose of urging you to support this institution, as to ask you to contribute to its extension, so that a vast

number of applicants for admission may not be repulsed from its gates, and sent back to the sins of the streets and the wretchedness of pauperism. The number of seventy is only a small portion of those who need the refuge of an Asylum from vice. How many of this class of persons, think you, are in the workhouse at present? Nearly 200! Do you imagine that a quarter of those 200 would consign themselves to the refuge of the workhouse, if the Magdalen Asylum were opened for their protection? I am certain they would not. I have had some connexion with the Cork workhouse, and I have seen sentiments of piety and penance shooting forth like seedlings in the souls of some of those poor creatures, especially on the bed of sickness, which needed but the fostering hand of some pious Sister of Charity to make them blossom unto life everlasting, but which, from the want of this nurturing care, were smothered and destroyed—never again to vegetate even for a moment.

In addition to these 200, remember how many are at this moment on your streets, whom, if not for their own sakes, at least for the sake of your own peace, and the morality of your children, it would be well to rescue from their degraded position. I believe it can be safely stated that the streets of Cork at night display as great an amount of vice as any city of its size in Europe. This statement may be exaggerated, but I have frequently heard it made. One thing is certain, that the public have constant occasion to complain of the blasphemous, obscene, and riotous language issuing from the mouths of those unhappy beings, which disturbs their rest at night, and shocks the purity of their innocent children. You are, therefore, called upon to-day to throw open to those unfortunate creatures the refuge of the Mary Magdalen Asylum, to save them from the impiety of blasphemy, from the debasement of drunkenness, from the abominations of impurity; to rescue them from the streets, from the gaol, from the workhouse, from despair, and from suicide; to conduct them to a sanctuary where the sparks of piety which have lain dormant from childhood in their bosoms may be resuscitated by the gentle breathings of charity, and their sinful souls be cleansed in the regenerating waters of the second baptism of penance. And to you who abound in the possession of wealth, this is no mere

matter of choice, it is a matter of serious and stern obligation. You are bound in charity to expend your superfluous resources in providing for the temporal and spiritual amelioration of the condition of those who need your assistance. And who is more needful than the Magdalen? She is distinguished by every quality which appeals most imploringly to your charitable feelings; she is poor, for poverty is most frequently the cause of her misfortune; she is an orphan, for her parents are dead or have forsaken her; she is a woman, and lacks the protection to which woman instinctively aspires; she is a sinner; alas! she had almost become a reprobate. In this, as in every other lesson of charity, our Blessed Redeemer affords us in His own conduct a splendid model for our imitation. He was compassionate to the sinful, but penitent Magdalen, whose iniquities He forgave, because she loved so much; He forgave the adulteress when man would condemn her. Will you not endeavour to imitate the charity and the sweet pity of your Divine Master? On pure temporal grounds, it should be to you a matter of vital interest to support and extend the advantages of this institution, for, by so doing, you would diminish the taxation necessary for the support of so many inmates of the workhouse, the bridewell, and the gaol; you would remove from amongst you so many useless members of society—nay, worse than useless, for they supply thieves and robbers to the public; you withdraw so many temptations and dangers from the paths of youth, so many annoyances from your streets, and give back to society so many honest, religious, and industrious members, who make restitution to the public for their former indolence by the resources of their labour, and edify by their conversion those whom they before scandalized by their criminal excesses.

But you will be actuated in this good work by a higher and a holier motive; you will be charitable to-day, because God is to receive glory by your beneficence; you will snatch from the jaws of hell souls redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Oh! if you saved only one, what glory would you give to your Creator, for you would make the heavens rejoice more for that straying sheep, which you led back to the fold, than for the ninety-nine that went not astray. If you love God, therefore—if

you value the souls of your fellow-creatures, and your own—if the fire of true charity burn in your breasts, and oh! if it did not, you would not be here to-day—if you wish to secure the morality of your children, and promote the best interests of society,—be generous to the Magdalen Asylum. And you, ladies, as you value the purity of womanhood, and the honour of your sex, as your hearts are tender, compassionate and forgiving, extend your protecting arms to your poor wandering sisters, for they are your sisters, and but for temptation might be as pure and as virtuous as you. Save, oh! save them from wretchedness, from sin, from impenitence, from hell. I have done—I leave the rest to God—I have appealed to your understanding. May God touch your hearts, that, giving generously, you may receive an eternal reward from Him who has said: “It is not the will of your Father, who is in heaven, that one of those little ones should perish.”

SERMON

ON THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.¹

"What is man, O Lord, that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of man that thou shouldst visit him?"—PSALM viii. 5.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—We are assembled here this evening for the purpose of participating in a devotion most pleasing to God, and most beneficial to our own souls. We are met, with Him in our midst, as truly as He was in the midst of His Apostles at His Last Supper, to adore, and praise, and return Him thanks for the institution of a Sacrament which, of all others, nay, which, before all His works, proclaims His infinite love for us. We are met to atone, by our heartfelt homage, for the insults offered to Him in this most adorable Sacrament, either by ourselves or our fellow-creatures, and to declare to Him our fixed resolution henceforward to return love for love, and to die rather than renew one pang of that Sacred Heart, which has already endured so much for sinful, ungrateful man.

My Brethren, it is much, very much to be deplored, that we all love God so little, and that, perhaps, there are some of us who do not love Him at all. We generally love those who love us; it is an instinct of our nature; but, although God's love for us is boundless, yet we offend Him much more than we offend even the humblest of His creatures. There is a sort of wantonness in our insults to God, which is not found in our insults to man. Few men insult others without some provocation, without, at least, some show of justification; and if one man knows that another loves him, he will overlook a thousand provocations rather than their

¹ Preached in the Church of St. Augustine, Cork, on the occasion of a Quarant' Ore, Sept. 4, 1864.

friendship should be ruptured; but, alas! although God gives us no provocation, although He loves us as man can never love his fellow-man, yet, even the best of us, at times, offend Him, almost without temptation, through sheer wantonness—with an utter carelessness as to whether we offend Him or not; we forget His love for us, for a petty, trifling pleasure, for a wounded feeling, for a childish pride, for the possession of the merest bauble; we offer to His Eternal, adorable Majesty an insult which would be sufficient to bring Jesus again from heaven, and to enact once more the tragic horrors of Calvary! Oh! can it be possible that we understand how God loves us, when we offend Him so? Can our ingratitude be so black that we wantonly wring with sorrow that heart which, from the very dawn of eternity, has throbbed with tenderest love for us? My Brethren, it cannot be! We must not comprehend God's love for us, else we would manifest towards Him that respect which we do not deny to the humblest of His creatures—the respect which prompts us to abstain from insulting them, without, at least, some pretext or shadow of provocation.

Let us, therefore, now, at least, consider well the great, the profound love of God for us, only as manifested in the institution of the adorable Sacrament of the Altar, that we may form a just conception of the injury we have done Him by our former insults, and that we may resolve, at length, never, never more to offend Him, but to give Him, at least, a small tribute of our love, in return for the unbounded love which He has here manifested towards us.

And, indeed, in considering the love of our Divine Redeemer, as shown to us in this Sacrament, it is so vast, so profound, so much beyond the ken of man, that in the contemplation of it we become lost in amazement, and utterly fail to comprehend it.

Whether we consider the circumstances under which it was established, the nature of the boon, or the immense disparity that exists between the Giver and receiver, we are equally at a loss to comprehend the magnificence of the gift, and the love of the Great Being who has bestowed it. But let us do the best we can; if we cannot understand it all, let us conceive it as far as our capacity admits. Let us satisfy ourselves that God's love for us has no bounds, that the perception of it fills our minds to overflowing, and that it

is so vast that God Himself alone can weigh it in the infinitude of His comprehension.

To understand it well, it is necessary that we should proceed to the supper-room at Jerusalem, and there behold our Divine Redeemer performing this great, this adorable mystery of His love for man. "Before the festival day of the Pasch," says St. John, "Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." He is, therefore, about to manifest His love in some very striking manner to His Apostles, and through them to all mankind. It is the night, of all others, when the tenderness of His whole nature, human and Divine, was to be evoked, when, like the boundless ocean that surrounds the earth, it was to flow into every channel of universal humanity, without diminishing its own vast immensity. It was the night when he was to take a last farewell of those twelve chosen loved ones of His heart; when the pangs of anticipated parting quickened into a livelier life that love which he never ceased to cherish for them; it was the night when one might suppose every sensation of His mind to be absorbed with the contemplation of the frightful agonies through which He was to pass—the night of His Passion; the night when He was to feel the lonely horrors of Gethsemane when the agony of His soul was to force the blood from every pore of His Body, in the garden of Olives; when the three chosen companions of His night-journey, oblivious of His woes, were to abandon Him in the unconsciousness of slumber; when one of the chosen twelve was to betray Him to the enemy; when He was to be buffeted and spat upon in Caiaphas' Hall; when all the Apostles were to fly from Him in fear and shame; when the Shepherd was to be struck, and the sheep to be dispersed; when Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, was to swear that he never knew Him. Oh! such was the occasion, of all others, selected for the institution of this, the richest, the most exalted, the most enduring mystery of Jesus' love for man!

Behold Him thus, seated in the midst of His chosen twelve—it is His last meeting with them before His death. He is about to deliver to them a long discourse, which is related to us in full by the Evangelist St. John, and which, for tenderness and love, surpasses all

the discourses ever delivered even by the God of Love. He is about to make His last will and testament, and the fishermen of Galilee are to be not only the inheritors, but the executors of all the treasures of His love. He is about to leave them a legacy—a legacy worthy of a testator whose power, and goodness, and love, are infinite and eternal—a legacy worthy of Him of whom it was said, that “His delights were to be with the children of men”—who was to remain with us all days, even to the consummation of the world—who, having loved His own, who were in the world, loved them even unto the end.” And what was this legacy to be? Was He to send down from the heights of Heaven one of those bright archangels who worship before His Eternal Throne, to bless the earth by his perpetual presence, and cheer poor fallen man, with the sight of a glory himself might attain? This would indeed be an admirable instance of His love. But the gift was to be something greater still. Was He to come and dwell in spirit, in some manner more marked than His omnipotence allows, enshrined in some sanctuary, whither His votaries might flock from the ends of the earth, to adore within a short distance of the Deity Himself? Oh! much more than this. But let us hear His own Divine words. Let us fancy that we are seated round that supper-table, and that these words are addressed to us, as they were addressed to the Apostles: “And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blest, and brake, and gave to His disciples, saying—Take ye and eat, this is my body; and, taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying—Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins.” Ah! here is the great secret of Jesus’ love. He is God, and His gifts must be Godlike. All things outside God are small—infinately small in comparison to Him. His last legacy must be nothing insignificant—nothing unworthy of a God. What shall He give, then, worthy of a God, unless He give Himself? Yes, Himself it must be. “Take ye and eat, this is my body; drink ye all of this, for this is my blood.” Oh! Lord, is it not enough that for the love of us Thy adorable blood has empurpled the pillars in the Hall of Pilate—that it is destined to bedew the grass in the Garden of Gethsemane—that it must ebb to the last drop from the gaping wounds

upon the cruel cross on Calvary? Is that not enough; but must Thou also decree that the children of men, sinners though they be, shall possess Thy body and Thy blood for ever, as the food and nourishment of their souls? So it is, my Brethren; and oh! what tongue can describe, what language can paint, the excess of our Blessed Saviour's love in the institution of this most adorable mystery. So great is that love, that we seek but in vain to conceive it in thought, much less to describe it in words. The liveliest imagination cannot represent it to itself, and in the contemplation of its magnitude we can only give way to the feelings of wonder and amazement, which language altogether fails to depict.

If St. Paul, inspired as he was, could only describe the glory of heaven by saying that it was such as "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive," how can we, weak mortals, describe the love of God for man, as here evinced, better than by borrowing the language of the Apostle? For of that love it may indeed be said that it is such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. For, as the great St. Augustine tells us, God has here exhausted His beneficence. All-powerful as He is, He could give us no more than He does when He gives us Himself: all rich as He is, what more valuable, what richer gift could He confer even on the most exalted of His creatures than Himself? By the fall of our first parents, my Brethren, the most disastrous consequences were entailed on the human race—by that fatal sin we lost the vigour of our understandings, and the moral life of our souls. By eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, our first parents lost what they could never regain; their intellects were blinded—they became a prey to uncertainty and doubt, and this curse was entailed upon their posterity to the end of time. So much did they lose by partaking of the tree of knowledge. In punishment of their fall, they were driven away from that other tree which bloomed in the midst of Paradise, the tree of life, by partaking of which, they and we were to acquire perpetual virtue and a glorious immortality. This twofold want our blessed Saviour came on earth to remedy. A new tree of knowledge He planted on the top of mountains to which all the nations of the earth might recur in their

difficulties and doubts—beneath whose shadow they might repose, by whose fruits they might be fed, by virtue whereof they might acquire the knowledge of Eternal Truth. That tree of knowledge is His Church; beside it He planted the new tree of life, the adorable Sacrament of His own Body and Blood, by partaking of which man's moral vitality is restored; by which virtue is augmented, grace infused, faith strengthened, hope cherished, and charity inflamed; by which the soul is nourished and fed, lifted up from its prostrations, comforted, consoled, admitted to the friendship of God, and conducted to eternal life. In the old law, when the people partook of the flesh of the victims offered to God, they congratulated themselves that thus they were admitted to a close communion with the Deity Himself—that they, as it were, sat at one table with Him and shared His hospitality; but in the new law what a glorious realization invests that fancy of the old: for, now we partake of a Victim which not only admits us to a communion with the Deity, but unites and incorporates us with God; makes us one with Him, and Him with us; makes us, as St. Peter says, “partakers of the Divine nature;” for, by eating this bread, God abides in us and we in Him—not for a time, but for eternity; for, says Christ, “Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead: he who eats this bread shall live for ever.”

In Paradise God appeared visibly to our first parents, and walked with them through that blessed region of delights. Oh! what an inestimable favour was that. But to us God not only appears in person, not only keeps our company, but enters into our very hearts, where He reposes as on a throne, fills the soul with sweetest joy and consolation, inspires holy thoughts that elevate us above this sinful earth, and gives us even here below a view into that heaven of endless boundless joy which He has prepared for those who love Him. Oh! you who often approach the Holy Table with sentiments of piety and love, tell me could all the real or even imaginary pleasures of the world afford you any joy like the joy of receiving your Lord? And oh! you who have fallen away from innocence, who have “forsaken the right ways and gone into the crooked ways,” if ever your minds, wearied with the distractions and cares of sin and worldliness, wander back to the days of vanished youth and forsaken virtue, tell me, oh! tell me,

have you ever experienced any pleasure so pure, so real, so entrancing, as that which you felt on those happy mornings when in the spring-time of your youth, and the fervour of your zeal, you received at the altar the Body of your Lord? Does not the memory of those happy days come back upon your sin-enslaved souls, as the dreams of his lost native land come back at night upon the exile, unfountaining the bitter tears of regretful sorrow, and awakening feelings akin to those which touched the hearts of the captive daughters of Jerusalem, when, in the gloom of their bondage, by the rivers of Babylon, they sat, and wept, and remembered the enchanting songs of Sion? And oh! on that night of sorrows when our Blessed Saviour invented this mystery of love, he thought, no doubt, of our forlorn condition in this miserable world, this sad, sad scene of our pilgrimage to the other; He knew how much we needed a guide, a consoler, and a friend; and such was His love for us that He resolved that guide, consoler, and friend should be no other than Himself. He thought of the weary days of our lonely exile; how, wandering through this valley of tears, our souls should sigh with their heaven-born instinct for the good things of Sion; how, sick and faint, we should totter on the way unless refreshed with the manna of life, not with "the food that perisheth;" and thus He bequeathed to us that bread which angels dare not taste, to strengthen us in our journey to the land where, we expect—let us hope not in vain—to be filled for eternity with the plenty of His Father's House.

And, can it be possible, my Brethren, that any human being, any Christian, any one so favoured by God as to be the inheritor of such deep, such inexhaustible love, could repay that love by insulting the very God who has so marvellously enriched him? Can it be possible that any one would wantonly receive into a bosom defiled with mortal sin the gracious Lord of heaven and earth? Can it be possible that any one of us has ever been guilty of so black a crime? Oh! let us hope that such is not the case; but should it be so, let us reflect on the baseness of our ingratitude, on the atrocity of the sacrilege we have committed. Let us tremble at the fate of Judas, who received the body of His Lord while his soul rankled with the guilt of treason; let us weigh well the terrible words of

St. Paul, "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord:" That is, he shall be guilty of Deicide, of putting God to death; he shall repeat the crime of Calvary; nay, his guilt shall be far blacker and more hideous than the guilt of the Jews who crucified our Lord; for, as we are assured by St. Paul, if the Jews had known the Lord of Glory, they would not have crucified Him. They imagined that Jesus was only the Son of Joseph and Mary; that He was a seducer of the people, and an enemy to the law of Moses. But it is not so with the unworthy communicant; he believes that Jesus is the Messiah—He beholds Him with the eyes of faith really present on our altars—he acknowledges Him to be the Lord of Glory, the Son of the Most High, the King of kings, the Lord of lords; and yet, with a full consciousness of his own crimes, he dares to insult the Majesty of God, and condemns Him to a far more disgraceful death in his breast than that which He endured upon the Cross.

The executioners who put our Lord to death were called the ministers of God's justice; they were the instruments by which our Lord effected His resolution of offering Himself in sacrifice to His Eternal Father—a resolution He formed at the first moment of His conception. They seemed to take part with God in carrying out the work of our redemption; they lifted their hands against the Holy One, when every hand was to be lifted against Him. But the unworthy communicant accomplishes no designs of the Almighty. On the contrary, he dishonours the Son, while the Father is glorifying Him. No one unites with Him in the sacrifice—he is not an instrument in the hands of God; he is himself the plotter, the executioner; heaven and earth look with horror on his crime, and the whole guilt of the innocent blood of the Lamb falls on him alone.

We do not find, my Brethren, that any of those of whom it is recorded in the Gospel that they received any special mark of our Blessed Saviour's regard, had any hand, act, or part, in His execution. From that tragic scene we miss the lame whom He healed, the blind whom He restored to sight, the leper whom He cleansed, the dead whom He brought back to life. Alas! what a contrast does their absence from Calvary afford to the black ingratitude of the

unworthy communicant ! He was blind, but he was restored to sight—he was struck with the leprosy of sin, but he was cleansed by the beneficent voice of Jesus—he was dead, but Jesus restored him to life. Had his crime been committed by a pagan or an infidel, by one whose soul never basked in the sunshine of the Gospel-light—had never been enriched with the thousand graces imparted only to the Christian, his audacity would not excite our astonishment so much ; but that a child of God, an heir of heaven, a friend, a brother, should lift his consecrated hand to fling the Lord from His throne of glory ! oh ! this is ingratitude indeed ! Our Lord Himself, mild and gentle and forgiving as He is, cannot restrain his indignation with the perpetrator of such treason : “ If my enemy,” says He, “ if my enemy had insulted me, I would verily have borne with it, but thou, the man of my peace, my guide, my familiar, who didst walk with me in concert in the House of God.” Truly, my Brethren, the magnitude of the crime is beyond description. The very executioners who nailed our Blessed Saviour to the cross seemed somewhat excusable for their ignorance. For this reason the gentle Victim of their fury pleads with His heavenly Father for their forgiveness : “ Father,” He says, “ forgive them, for they know not what they do.” But He cannot witness the profanations of His altar by those who are not ignorant, without denouncing the heinousness of their guilt, and proclaiming to them the eternal vengeance which awaits it : “ Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat that bread and drink of the chalice ; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.”

Oh ! then, my Brethren, let me entreat of you this night, if ever you have been guilty of the monstrous crime of receiving your Lord unworthily, to ask His pardon before you leave His blessed presence on the altar. His love for you hath no end, and His mercy endureth for ever. It is possible, nay, it is more than probable, that you have never been guilty of such wickedness ; in that case, for yourselves you need no pardon ; but, oh ! reflect how many unhappy Christians throughout the world have committed, and still commit, this frightful iniquity ; out of the superabundance of

your love, make some reparation, some atonement, to the offended love of your Divine Redeemer. He stands there before you—so near, that you may behold and converse with Him like friends—so generous, that you may ask of Him what you please, and be sure to obtain it; so loving and tender, that our bosoms may melt in the contemplation of His sweetness; and yet so exalted, so glorious, so powerful, that we may exhaust the language of praise and adoration, and still be at a loss for epithets worthy of His greatness! Now, no longer seeking to dazzle us by His glory or affright us by His power, we behold Him divested of all the splendour, by which He thrills the heavens with delight. Let us approach Him with that spirit of faith, and love, and adoration, that filled the hearts of the Eastern Kings, when they knelt and poured their fragrant offerings in lavish profusion at His feet, as He lay a trembling infant, in the cold, dark stable of Bethlehem. Let us fling ourselves before Him, as Magdalen did, in the supper-room of Jerusalem, conscious of His boundless love. Whither shall we recur for sympathy or for support, if not to Him who has declared Himself the sweet, the tender physician of our souls? “Come,” He says, “to me, all you who labour and are heavy burthened, and I will refresh you.”

Oh! Jesus, God of love, “whose delight it is to be with the children of men,” grant us the grace to love Thee with all our hearts; grant us henceforward to receive Thee into our bosoms with all the love Thy love deserves; that having tasted on earth, and seen, how sweet is the Lord, we may be worthy to enjoy, in the kingdom of Thy glory, the inexhaustible sweetness of the everlasting banquet of thy love. Amen.

SERMON

ON THE WORD OF GOD.

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed: and if any man think himself religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulations, and to keep one's self unspotted from this world.”—CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES, i. 22, &c.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—On that dreadful day, when we shall all appear before the tribunal of our Eternal Judge, we must render to Him a strict account, not only how often we have heard the Word of God preached to us, but how we have heard it, whether with cold indifference, or with zealous attention—whether we have done all the good which that Word inculcates, or avoided all the evil which that Word denounces. “We must be,” in the language of the Apostle, “doers of the word, and not hearers only,” deceiving ourselves.

The Word of God points out to us the road to our everlasting home. With our souls overshadowed by the heavy clouds of sin, we wander darkly, groping through this valley of tears, unconscious whither we go; but the Word of God, like some bright star in the firmament, lights the path before us; and if we lose its heavenly ray we are ourselves lost in the gloom, and become a prey to the roaring lion, who “goes about seeking whom he may devour.” We are cast like some frail bark on the ocean of life, journeying on towards the wished-for haven of a happy eternity. We are tossed about by the billows of tempta-

tion, and driven back by the tempests of passion. The Word of God, like some benign beacon, shines out on the bosom of the deep, stretching out before us, by its reflection on the waters, a pathway of calm and silvery light, while all is dark around. If we turn away from that opening light, and seek some other course, alas! what fate can we expect but hopeless wandering, shipwreck, misery, and death? Each one of us is like a sick man laid upon his bed, writhing in the torture and agony brought upon him by that direful disease called sin. The minister of God, skilled in His Holy Word, stands by as a tender physician to administer the healing draught—to apply the soothing balsam. If we despise His counsel—if we reject His medicine, must we be surprised if we suffer all the agonies of terror and remorse, and die that eternal death from which God's Holy Word alone can save us?

And yet, my Brethren, how many of us treat the Word of God with this unhappy indifference? We hear it often preached, and we close our ears to its most sweet sounds. We see it shining out before us, and yet we shut our eyes, and turn our backs upon its cheering rays. We know how effectually it can cure the infirmities of our souls, and yet we shun the soothing and the consolation which it imparts. We are like the man alluded to by the Apostle, "who beholds his own countenance in a glass, and going his way, presently forgets what manner of man he is." Remember the dreadful doom that God denounces upon those who reject and despise His Holy Word:—"You have despised my counsel," He says, "and neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock you when that will come to you which you feared. When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction, as a tempest, shall be at hand, when tribulations and distress shall come on you, then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear; they shall rise in the morning, and shall not find me, because they have hated instruction, and have not received the fear of the Lord." My Brethren, in order that we may not receive this punishment at the hands of God, but rather that we may deserve the blessing promised to those who "hear the Word of God, and keep it," listen, I pray you, while I show you the sublime effects which the Word

of God is capable of producing, while I explain the reasons why those effects are not invariably produced, and while I point out the disposition one should have, in order that those effects may, for the future, be produced in our souls.

And first, with regard to the sublime efficacy of God's Holy Word, consider the wonderful effects produced by it through the whole world, at the first dawn of Christianity. I will not speak of the enthusiasm with which it fired the multitudes of Judea, who heard it fall from the Divine lips of Jesus Himself. I will not describe to you how He was followed by thousands of men, forgetful of their homes, their occupations, and their physical wants, that they might hear those Divine words that fell softly and vivifyingly, as the dews of heaven, from His sacred lips. But what were the effects produced by it, when twelve illiterate fishermen preached it all over the world? When "their sound," as the Psalmist sings, "went forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Suddenly the darkness of Gentile ignorance and superstition was dispersed—the Sages and Philosophers of Greece and Rome, skilled in all the learning of the ancients, were confounded and ashamed; their sophisms were laid bare—their eloquence was out-rivalled—the Truth burst, at length, upon their view—their idols tumble in the dust—their gods, theretofore the recipients of divine adoration, are now discovered to be the pure creations of fancy; the "Unknown God" becomes the real claimant for their homage and adoration; thousands are converted; from those altars whence ascended the smoke of profane sacrifices to Jupiter or Mars, now ascends the grateful incense of prayer to the throne of the Most High; and where the blood of sheep and oxen flowed in fruitless homage to deities who had no existence, there was offered up the pure sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus, the crucified, in propitiation for the sins of men. But, not only was the philosophy of the Pagans humbled and confuted by the Word of God, but all the political power of the princes and kings, by which it was sustained throughout the world, yielded to its influence, and disappeared before it. The process was slow, but it was sure. Rome was the most powerful city in the world, and nothing could equal the power and majesty of the Cæsars. They were, so to speak, the monarchs of the

universe. We all know how they persecuted the Word of God, but we know how persistently the Word was preached, notwithstanding that unremitting persecution. God, however, remembered His promise :—"Going, therefore, teach all nations, and, behold, I am with you." The pride of the Roman Emperors and their power gradually dwindled away; and at length, upon their imperial throne sat, and still, after the lapse of 1800 years, sits the successor of St. Peter, wielding the sceptre of his spiritual authority, over an empire bounded only by the farthest limits of the universal world. Behold the wonderful effects produced by the preaching of God's Holy Word!

When we read the annals of the Christian Church, with what feelings of wonder and delight do we perceive the miraculous effects produced by the preaching of the Saints and Fathers, throughout the entire fold of Christ! Those holy men, attired in poor and humble garb, perfectly destitute of worldly power and dignity, austere in their habits, unattractive in appearance, barren of all the graces of rhetoric—for the most part unskilled "in the persuasive words of human wisdom," preach Christ crucified throughout the world, in language simple and unadorned, but vehement and fervid. Thousands flock around them, chained, fascinated, as it were, by some invisible power. They are chased by the persecutor from public places; they retire into caverns and solitudes, followed by eager multitudes of hearers; hundreds and thousands are converted and baptized; persecution haunts the increasing multitudes of Christians, but their conversion is sincere—their faith is unflinching—they are arraigned before the tribunals of the land, and, boldly professing the religion of Jesus, seal their faith with their blood, and are rewarded for their fidelity to Him with crowns of everlasting glory.

The Word of God, my Brethren, is the same to-day that it was in the earliest days of the Christian Church; the same Gospel we preach to-day that St. Peter preached to the Jews more than 1800 years ago, when by his two first sermons he converted 8000 souls to the Lord. It is always the same—it is incapable of change. The Holy Catholic Church, guided by the spirit of truth, preserves with jealous care the Holy Word of God in all its primitive purity, and hands it down from generation to generation, undefiled and uncorrupted as it was received from the

mouths of Christ and His Apostles. Why it does not produce the same effects now as it did in the primitive days of Christianity, I will explain immediately. But we are, nevertheless, witnesses every day of its extraordinary efficacy and power. Do we not see hundreds of men, even Christian men, wandering away for years from the path of duty, forgetful of God and of futurity, wallowing in sin, the victims of passion, the slaves of Satan, scandals to the world, who, at some happy moment, touched by the grace of God, come to hear His Holy Word; their hearts are moved, they kneel before the minister of God, confess their sins, and live for the rest of their days in piety and penitence, loving and beloved by the Almighty. What is it that inspires us with a horror for sin, but the Holy Word of God? What fills us with apprehensions of judgment, death, and futurity, but the Word of God? What paints to us the glories of heaven, and fills us with joy? what presents to our souls the infinite mercies of God, and soothes and consoles us? what melts us to tears in considering the passion of the Lord? what nerves and encourages us to virtue in remembering the trials and triumphs of the Saints, but the Holy Word of God, preached by His minister in the simple eloquence of the Gospel, and heard with faith, with humility, and with zeal for the sanctification of our souls? In fine, what is it that, when the Christian lies upon his death-bed, and when he is about to close his eyes for ever on the world, cheers and consoles him, alleviates his pain, nay, makes suffering sweet, bows down his soul with resignation, strengthens his faith, animates his hope, inflames his love for God? what is it that lights up a smile on his pale cheek, even while his bosom is rent with the quivering agonies of death, but the holy words of salvation distilled into his dying ear by the attendant minister of God—words which tell him that there is a world beyond the grave, where the throbbing heart shall rejoice with eternal jubilation in the bosom of the Almighty, and that pallid cheek bloom with perennial health in the sunshine of a blessed immortality?

Such, my Brethren, are the sublime, the glorious effects which the Word of God is capable of producing in the souls of men. Let us now see why those effects are not invariably produced—why sermons are now preached, why

the Gospel truths are now expounded as of old, and yet why no extraordinary conversions are wrought ; but why, on the other hand, men leave the House of God barren as they entered it, unimpressed, uninstructed, unconsolated. The fault does not lie with the Word of God, for I have shown you what that Word is capable of doing. Where else then does the fault lie ? It must be either with the preachers of the Word, or with the hearers of it. Is it the fault of the preachers ? I will show you that it is not. Every preacher of God's Holy Word has Divine authority for preaching, "Going, therefore," said Christ to His Apostles, "teach all nations, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." All lawfully appointed successors of the Apostles, therefore, to the end of the world, have not only God's authority for preaching, but they have His command, and the promise of His Divine assistance. They are all, however, differently endowed by Him with natural gifts and talents ; some are eloquent, and some are not. Men cannot excel in all things, and he who excels in eloquence is often deficient of other qualities that have just as high a title to admiration. But, my Brethren, every preacher preaches as best he can ; and no matter in what uninteresting language his thoughts may be conveyed, the truths he speaks are the truths of the Gospel, and when closely examined will be found to be identical with those which have been decorated by the immortal eloquence of an Ambrose, or gilded by the golden periods of a Chrysostom. In fact, the mouth of the preacher is but the trumpet through which God proclaims to the world the Gospel truths : "It is not you," he says, "who speak, but the Spirit of my Father that speaketh in you." Such being the case, it is not the fault of the preacher that God's Holy Word does not invariably produce its effects in our souls. The fault must, therefore, be with the hearers of the Word, and so it is in point of fact.

What are the motives that, for the most part, induce men to come and hear the Word of God ? Is it that they may learn—that they may be instructed in the truths of salvation ; that they may be impressed with the enormity of sin, with the terrors of judgment, and excited to tears of penitential sorrow ? Ah ! no, far from it. They come to the House of God for a great variety of reasons. Some

come that they may get over in some way the obligations of sanctifying the Sabbath day; others that they may see and be seen; some that they may attract the attention of their neighbours to the elegance of their persons, or the fashionableness of their attire; others that they may, as they say, kill time—for want of something else to do; they come, because if they remained away, as they would prefer, they would excite the attention, and call forth the unpleasant comments of their friends upon their indifference to the duties of religion; they come through an idle curiosity to hear some great preacher, to admire the eloquence of his style, the copiousness of his language, the graces of his gesture: as he gradually swells into some grand rhetorical flight they are filled with admiration—they exclaim to themselves, “how magnificent, how sublime! how beautiful!” but when he calmly expatiates on the enormity of sin, on the terrors of judgment, on the horrors of hell, their admiration is changed into indifference; they grow weary of those dull, commonplace exhortations to which they have so often listened before, and anxiously wait for the moment when the preacher shall leave these beaten paths, and lead them once more into the regions of fancy where no horrid phantoms are conjured up to strike terror or alarm, but where all is pleasing, beautiful, and gay. What is the consequence? They go away from the House of God, and take nothing with them: a hundred pious thoughts and reflections have been strewed before them in profusion, each more priceless than the gems and pearls so prized in this passing world, but they have not treasured up even one. They merely comment, ignorantly and arrogantly, on the sermon they have just heard; they praise or find fault as they have been pleased or disgusted; the invectives against vice in which the preacher indulged, they apply to every one but themselves. Grace has been offered to them and refused, spurned and despised. Wretched men! while dwelling with shallow, vulgar criticism on the defects, and ridiculing, as often happens, the tones and gestures of the preacher, they forget the words of Christ: “He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you, despises me.” They think not of the awful severity with which Christ denounces such sacrilegious conduct: “Into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth, shake the dust from

off your feet : Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that city."

What, therefore, are the dispositions that should animate you when you come to hear the Word of God? I will tell you. You must come to hear that Holy Word with faith, with humility, and with zeal for the sanctification of your souls. You must come with faith, believing that what you hear is not the word of man, but the Word of God. You must listen as if God Himself were speaking to you. "He who hears me, hears you." You must not consider who it is that speaks; you must ponder well on what you hear. The priests of the Church merely take the place of Christ Himself; they are, as St. Paul says, "the ministers and dispensers of his mysteries;" they are, as he says elsewhere, "the ambassadors of Christ." If you respect the ambassadors of a worldly king, how much more should you honour and respect the ambassadors of the King of kings and Lord of lords? You should hear the Word of God as St. Paul congratulates the Thessalonians on having heard it. "We give thanks," he says, "to God without ceasing, that when you received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it, not as the hearing of men, but as it is indeed, the word of God;" and it is to this lively faith he attributes the diffusion of the Word throughout the early Church. "From you," he says, "was spread out the word of the Lord, and in every place your faith is gone forth." It is for want of this faith that the Word of Christ made no impression on the stiff-necked Jews: "You hear not the words of God," he says, "because you are not of God." "He that is of God heareth the words of God. My sheep hear my voice." Imitate, therefore, my Brethren, the faith of the Christians of the early Church; hear the Word of God as they heard it. Their faith overcame all obstacles; in mountain and desert they heard the Holy Word; in subterraneous caverns and dark dungeons they cherished the sacred seed of faith, which gradually grew up into a great tree, covering the world with its branches, and sheltering beneath its foliage the children of Christ from the storms of temptations, and the tempests of destruction.

The Word of God, in order to fructify in our souls, must be heard not only with faith, but also with humility. You must come to hear it with a thorough conviction of

your own weakness and sinfulness. You must regard yourselves as prisoners arraigned before the tribunal of God, where all your vices, all your errors and weaknesses, are exposed, and where the judgments of God are denounced against you, in order that you may be humbled, confounded, and ashamed. Unless you bring this disposition of humility, your hearing of God's Word will be all in vain. Unless your souls are purified from the weeds and tares of pride, the Word of God, like the good seed, shall fall on an unfruitful soil, where it shall be choked up and lost for ever; and, what is worse, you shall be made accountable to God for having heard His Word, and for rejecting the means which it afforded you of eradicating your vices, and saving your immortal souls.

Finally, you must hear the Word of God with zeal for the sanctification of your souls. This is manifest, for, unless you sincerely desire to help out your own salvation, the Word of God will produce no effect on you. God is willing to assist us by His grace to save our souls; but He requires our co-operation in the great work. He who is cold and indifferent to his own salvation must not be surprised hereafter, if he finds that he is lost for ever. It were far better never to hear the Word of God than hearing to despise it, and turn to our own destruction the very means devised by Almighty God for averting that dreadful doom.

Oh! then, my Brethren, let me entreat you, whenever you hear the Word of God, to hear it as it ought to be heard—to remember that where His minister opens his mouth, you are about to hear, if not the very words, at least, the very truths that God Himself would address to you, if He appeared before you in human form. Remember that every truth of the Gospel uttered for your edification is a special grace and gift destined by God for your sanctification, and that if you disregard it, you shall most assuredly render to Him a severe account for mercy despised and grace rejected.

If you hear His Holy Word with the dispositions I have pointed out—with faith, with humility, and with zeal for your own sanctification, you may rest assured that that Word will take deep root in your souls—that God will water it with His inspiration, and bedew it with His graces,

so that it shall produce fruit a hundred-fold unto life everlasting. "All things shall pass away," says Christ, "but my words shall not pass away." It is His Eternal Word that has said, "Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keepeth it." Remember, therefore, and cherish well in your hearts the words of St. James, with which I opened, and with which I conclude this discourse: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

SERMON

ON THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

“ Comfortress of the afflicted, pray for us.”

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—There is no sorrow like that which the heart endures in secret ; of which we ourselves alone are conscious, and which oppresses us with gloom and dejection, while the world thinks us light-hearted and gay. We mix amongst our friends, and, while they see the faint smile that lights our cheek at the passing jest, they little dream of the misery, the untold agony, that wrings our bosoms, and brings us well nigh to the confines of despair. Oh ! at such a moment, how we long to find some sympathizing friend—some tender-hearted bosom to which we may freely disclose the sad story of our wrongs—the bitter catalogue of our afflictions. And when, at length, the melancholy tale is told, and the patient listener turns to console us, how sweetly the words of solace fall upon our ear ; how the heart expands with love, with gratitude, with courage, and the tears, which, but a few moments before, were the silent interpreters of unutterable woe, are suddenly converted, by the magic touch of sympathy, into the exponents of equally unalterable joy. But where shall we find this sweet consoler, this gentle confidant, this tender heart, before which we may bare our own, and to which we may impart the last secret of our sorrows ? Alas ! for the perversity of human nature, such friendship is rare, very rare, in this cold, heartless world. Self-love predominates over every generous impulse of nature, and it has almost passed into a proverb, that hearts which have confided most have been most frequently betrayed. But there is at least one human being to whom we are invited to recur in all our tribulations, into whose sacred bosom no profane thought of

self-love ever presumed to seek a resting-place, whose ear is ever open to hear our complaints, whose heart is ever willing to redress our wrongs, whose lips are ever ready to defend our cause—who, though she reigns invisible in heaven, regards with tenderest solicitude every child of Adam that dwells even in the obscurest corners of the earth; and whose joy and delight is to infuse the balm of sweetest consolation into bosoms over-burthened with sorrow. She is by excellence the comfortress of the afflicted, Mary, the Virgin Mother of God.

Oh! what a delight is it for us, in this valley of tears, to have a comfortress ever at hand, so gentle, so sweet, so benign! It matters not what may be the nature or the intensity of our sorrow, she has balm for all our wounds, and antidotes for all our afflictions. Who is the most afflicted of God's creatures upon earth? Is it the mother from whom death has just snatched the only child of her bosom? Is it the victim of incurable disease, chained to the bed from which he shall never rise, pining away from day to day, until he can pine no more? Is it the captive shut in from the blessed light of heaven, without the cheering sight of a human face, and without a vestige of hope that he shall be ever released from his miserable bondage? Is it the poverty-stricken wretch, once the pampered child of fortune, but whose ambition now is only that he may be filled with pauper's food, and whose body is to be cast into a pauper's grave? It matters not—Mary is a comforter to all. The childless mother may reflect that Mary, too, was rendered childless, as mother never was before or since—that her Divine Jesus hung naked, for three hours, before her eyes, upon a rough cross, until death delivered Him from agonies which He alone could suffer. The victims of disease may remember that, "Whom God loveth, He chastiseth;" and that Mary suffered tribulations of mind to which no sickness or disease could be well compared. The captive may reflect that Mary was an exile for years in the land of Egypt, far away from friends and home: and those who pine in poverty and humility may derive consolation from the thought, that Mary has said of herself, in her own delightful canticle:—"Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid, therefore shall all nations call me blessed."

The best comforters are those who have experienced sorrow: and who shall number the sorrows of Mary, the

Queen of Martyrs? From the cradle to the grave she was the victim of sorrow and affliction. She is beautifully styled by the Church the "Mystical Rose;" for, as the rose is the most beautiful of flowers, emitting the sweetest perfume, and blooming in the midst of thorns, so Mary was the most beautiful amongst women: "Thou art all fair, my blessed, and there is no stain in thee." Her virtues were an odour of sanctity before God: "Draw me, we will run after thee in the odour of thy ointments;" but her soul bloomed in the midst of the thorns of tribulation: "As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters." (Cant. ii.)

Preserved by God from every stain of sin, she was yet a victim to all the sufferings entailed by sin upon the human race: proving to us that sufferings are the condition of humanity, and when borne with patience and resignation like hers, they are the surest passport to our heavenly country. Who can describe the agony of her mind when, the time of her delivery being come, she found there was no room for her in the inn of Bethlehem? No room for the Queen of Heaven and earth—no room for her whose presence fills with joy the very angels of heaven. On a cold winter's night, and under circumstances so distressing, while the sinners of the earth recline on beds of down and soft couches, the Mother of God retires to a stable into which the cold wind blows, and the wintry rain-drops fall—her only companion a dumb beast, her only couch some damp straw, and there she is forced to give birth to Jesus, the mighty Lord of all creation! "She brought forth her first born," says the Sacred Scripture, "and having wrapped him in swaddling-clothes laid him in a manger." Oh! how her mother's heart must have been pained by this cruel necessity. Fancy it your own case, mothers, and then think how much more sensitive than you was the Mother of God, whose mind had none of the grossness engendered by sin, and whose soul was enriched in the highest degree with all the graces and attributes that adorn the soul of woman—the tenderness, the softness, the delicacy, the modesty, and the deep self-sacrificing love peculiar to motherhood. But what were those distresses to those which were to follow? Eight days after the birth of Jesus, she presents the infant in the temple, in compliance with the precept of the law: and

there Simeon, a holy man, inspired by God, appears, and addresses the Virgin Mother. Does he congratulate her on the immense dignity she has obtained by giving birth to the Lord of Heaven? Does he foretell for her happiness and glory? No, his prophetic words convey no comfort, but foretell of suffering and woe unspeakable. "A sword of grief," he says, "shall pierce thy soul;" and full soon did that sword begin to pierce the virgin heart. An edict is passed by Herod, that all the children of Judea under two years of age shall be put to death. Mary hears of the edict, and presses the infant Jesus more closely to her arms. She knows not what to do, but being, as the prophet described her, "the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope," her love for her child, and her fear for his safety are not greater than her knowledge, and her hope that God will rescue her from the terrible danger; and accordingly we are told by St. Matthew that an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying, "Arise and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt, and be there until I shall tell thee, for it shall come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him." Oh! what a long and wearisome journey for the young and tender virgin; what days of toil; what agony of mind; what deep solicitude for the precious burden in her arms! No wonder the grief of her soul should be compared to a sword cutting and piercing her tender heart.

But passing over the other trials of Mary, which were each intensely bitter of themselves, let us come to that dreadful affliction, in comparison to which all the others were as nothing; the agony she endured at the foot of the Cross while gazing on the wounds, and the last expiring pangs of her only Son. No sufferings were at all comparable to hers on that occasion, save those which rent the heart of Jesus himself. Oh! mothers, think what would be your feelings if you saw the child of your bosom, innocent and good, dying naked on a rude rough cross before the gaze of cold and brutal men, and then you may have some faint idea of this tender mother's grief. Here indeed was the prophecy of Simeon well fulfilled, "A sword of grief shall pierce thy soul;" for, while the soldier's lance pierced only the body of Jesus, it pierced the soul of Mary; for, as St. Bernard says, "After Jesus had given up the ghost, the cruel lance which pierced his side did

not reach his soul, but thine, O blessed Mother! for His soul had already fled, but from the spot where His heart reposed thy heart could not be torn. A sword of grief did pierce thy soul, and hence we style thee more than martyr; for the sufferings of thy body were as nothing in comparison to the sufferings of thy mind. Was it not worse than a sword for thee to hear from the lips of Jesus the bitter words, 'Mother, behold thy son?' Oh! what an exchange! John is given thee for Jesus; the servant for the Lord; the disciple for the Master; the son of Zebedee for the Son of God; a mere man for the Deity Himself. How could thy soul have borne to hear those dreadful words, when the bare recollection of them is sufficient to rend even our hearts of stone?" But the climax of Mary's sufferings was attained when she beheld her Divine Son die. Had He died like other men, of some natural disease, or by any ordinary infliction, fostered and cared by His tender mother, she might have not repined so much; but to hang like a malefactor from a cross, with cruel nails bored through His sacred hands and feet, with a crown of thorns upon His head, from which, as from His whole body, the blood flowed in copious streams, and all this before the very eyes of that mother whose love was purer and more intense than mortal ever felt! Oh! my Brethren, we can form no conception of the agony that wrung that tender mother's heart; and then, when His last sigh had fled, and His Divine spirit had winged its way from earth, who can paint the gloom and desolation that brooded over the heart of Mary? For if the love with which He loved her was the sweetest solace to her soul during life, how sad, how lonely must she have felt when she could now no longer hear that gentle voice; no longer gaze on that pale brow where meekness loved to sit enthroned, or look into those mild eyes, perpetually beaming with calm, serene, celestial love for her!

But why dwell any longer on this mournful theme? I have said enough to show you that the life of Mary was from beginning to end a life of humility, of poverty, of suffering—indeed how could it be otherwise? Because unless she had suffered, she would not be a faithful imitator of her Divine Son, who was, according to the prophet, by excellence the "Man of Sorrows." But, why have I dwelt thus long on the sufferings of Mary? It is to show

you how peculiarly she is called by the Church, the "Comfortress of the Afflicted." Because as she suffered so much herself, she is capable of appreciating the sufferings of others; and as she is naturally the tenderest and the most loving of God's creatures, she is willing to impart to all the consolation which is due from a mother to her children. Her very name implies consolation—"And the name of the virgin was Mary"—for by Mary is meant, as you are all aware, the "star of the sea;" and what greater comfort can we enjoy, journeying over the ocean of life, exposed to its storms and its billows, than to behold through the clouds of sin and temptations that bright star gleaming out from the broad expanse of heaven, illuminating the troubled waters around us, and pointing out the way to the haven of everlasting salvation? And here again I must summon to my aid the delightful words of Saint Bernard, who, perhaps of all God's Saints, loved Mary most, and whose language in her praise is so sublimely beautiful that it falls little short of inspiration:—"Mary," he says, "is most justly compared to a star, for, as the star without losing any of its effulgence sends forth its rays upon the earth, so Mary, without tarnishing her virginity, brought forward the Saviour of the world; she is that glorious star sprung from Jacob whose radiance illuminates the universe—whose splendour radiates through the heights of heaven, and penetrates into the caverns of hell—shining abroad over the world, and imparting its warming influence to the minds of men: it fosters virtue and purges out vice. She is that glorious and exalted star, raised high above this vast and mighty ocean of human life, gleaming with merits, and brilliant with exemplars of virtue." Oh! if there be any one amongst you who feels that he is tossed about by the billows and tempests of this miserable life, let him not turn his eyes from this bright star, if he hopes to avoid being buried in the bosom of the deep. If the winds of temptations arise, if you rush upon the rocks of tribulations, behold the star, call out to Mary; if you are buffeted by the waves of ambition, of detraction, of envy, behold the star, call out to Mary; if the vessel in which your soul is embarked be struck by the billows of anger, of avarice, of sensuality, behold the star, call out to Mary; if thou art shaken by crime, dismantled by guilt, affrighted by the apprehension of judgment; if you feel yourself sinking

into the depths of sadness, into the abyss of despair, think, oh! think on Mary: in dangers, in difficulties, in doubts, think on Mary, call on Mary. Let not her name depart from thy mouth, nor from thy heart, and that thou mayest experience the efficacy of her prayer, be sure thou imitate the example of her virtue. Mariner on the ocean of life, following her, the 'star of the sea,' thou canst not wander from thy pathway; imploring her aid, thou shalt never despair; thinking on her, thou must escape destruction; protected by her, thou shalt know no fear; guided by her, thou shalt never feel fatigue; when she is propitious thou shalt arrive safely at the end of thy wearisome voyage, and then experience in thyself how justly it has been said: 'the name of the virgin was Mary.'"

As our Divine Saviour did not come to call the just, but sinners, to repentance—as there was no sinner exempt from His mercy—as He died alike for all—as He was equally beneficent to the devout Lazarus and the sinful Magdalen, so Mary affords her consolations not only to the just, but to sinners, of every degree of wickedness, who implore her aid and protection. God rains upon the just and upon the unjust; the stars of heaven shine alike upon the good and upon the bad—so does Mary, the star of the sea, shed the bright rays of her mercy and compassion upon all the human race alike; she prays for the just that they may be strengthened in grace; and for the sinner that he may be converted from his evil ways; she is all to all; to the wise and to the unwise she is equally generous; she opens to all the treasures of her mercy, that from their plenitude all may receive; that the captive may be able to rend his chains; that the sick may be aroused from the lethargy of sin; that the saddened bosom may be filled with the balm of consolation; that the sinner may receive pardon, the just man grace, the angels joy, and God Himself eternal glory.

Such, my Brethren, are the vast, the sublime privileges and prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Now let us see what lessons may we derive from the contemplation of her character in the point of view which I have traced out for you; we may learn from it two great lessons:—first, that we ought, like her, to regard suffering and tribulation as coming from the hands of God, and bear them with patience and resignation to His holy will; and secondly,

that we ought to be ourselves comforters of the afflicted, dispensing charity and consolation to our fellow-creatures, for the sake of that God who has commanded us to love our neighbour as ourselves. It was not for her own sins Mary suffered, for sin she had none; it was to give us in her own person an example of the excellence of suffering, and to prove that, as she who was sinless suffered so much, there is no other way to heaven for those who have sinned, but the way of sorrows and afflictions, in which she has walked before us.

It is needless for me, my Brethren, on this occasion to expatiate on the necessity and the excellence of suffering and tribulations—that subject would require a separate discourse, for perhaps there is no subject on which the Scriptures are so diffuse, and which is so well established by the examples of Christ, and His Saints, as well as by the arguments of Christian reasoning. “The wages of sin is death.” We are all sinners; we must satisfy God’s justice for our sins, either by self-imposed penance, or by punishment inflicted by God Himself. St. Paul tells Timothy that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. The life of Jesus was a life of unexampled suffering. What did He say to His Apostles when sending them abroad upon the world? “They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and they shall put you to death, and you shall be hated by all nations for my name’s sake.” Assisted by His grace, they joyfully undertook the task, and true to the words of Christ, they swam through their own blood to the crown of glory, which now adorns, and shall for ever adorn, their brows in the kingdom of God’s glory. For Christ had said, “Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake.” He had told them that their sorrow should be turned into joy, and therefore through many tribulations they entered into the kingdom of God. “If these things are done in the green wood, what shall be done in the dry?” If the just man is tried in the furnace of tribulation, what shall become of us poor sinners? Oh! then, my Brethren, let us accept our crosses as coming from the hands of God, and bear them as Mary bore hers, with patience and resignation, that we may be able to sing with her hereafter, “His mercy is from generation to generation, unto those who fear him; he hath put down the mighty from their seat, and he hath exalted the humble.”

But we must also perform the offices of consolation to our fellow-creatures, if we wish to follow the footsteps of Mary; we must visit the sick, console the afflicted, and be kind to God's poor. We are all members of one family, and God is our Father; we should love each other with fraternal love, for His sake. Have you ever been sick? How jealous you felt if you were not visited by your friends, and what comfort and delight you experienced when you found that you were remembered by those who, you fancied, had forgotten or disliked you. But, oh! what a charm would your visit have for the humble, and the distressed. "Be not wanting," says the wise man, "in comforting them that weep, and walk with them that mourn: be not slow to visit the sick, for by these things thou shalt be confirmed in love." "It is better," says the same inspired writer, "to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, for in that we are put in mind of the end of all, and the living thinketh what is to come." "Religion, clean and undefiled," says St. James, "before God and the Father, is to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulations." Remember the reward that Christ has promised to the just, and how that reward is to be earned. "Come," He shall say, "ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you; for I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me, sick and in prison and you visited me. Then the just shall answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see thee a stranger and take thee in, naked and clothed thee, or when did we see thee sick and in prison and visit thee?" And answering, the Lord will say to them, "Amen, I say to you, as often as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it unto me." Oh! happy sentence; and then He shall wipe away the tears from the eyes of His saints, and weeping and sorrow shall be no more, "because the former things were passed away."

Oh! let us not leave the House of God this day, before we pray to Mary that she may obtain for us the grace to bear our sufferings with patience; and learn from her, the comfortress of the afflicted, to shed the sweetness of consolation on our afflicted fellow-creatures—that we may deserve hereafter to hear that delightful sentence passed upon us all by Her Divine Son; that the troubles and tribulations of this life being over, we may deserve to meet in

that Eternal Kingdom the Queen of Martyrs, no longer suffering, but radiant with surpassing beauty, and encircled with a halo of everlasting glory ; that, filled with love and gratitude for the thousands of graces we have received upon earth, each one of us may raise his voice before God's imperishable throne, and join with the adorable Queen of Angels, in that canticle of praise once uttered by her on earth, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour." Amen.

SERMON

ON FALSE CONFIDENCE.

“Why stand you here all the day idle?”—Matt. xx. 6.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—We were sent into this world for no other end than that we might labour in the vineyard of the Lord; that we might work for the promotion of His glory, and thus earn our eternal reward. Reason as you will on the condition of man; account as you please for his position in life; argue on the past, and conjecture on the future, as wisdom or fancy may suggest; at the end of all this intellectual struggle for truth, an inward voice ever rings out clear and convincing within your soul—you were placed in the world for no other object than that you might labour in the vineyard of the Lord. Everything proclaims it; the shortness of life; the vanity of earthly pursuits; the emptiness of human pleasures; the fate of millions who have lived since the world began, and of whom there is now no trace; their ambition thwarted; their hopes deceived; their schemes baffled; their theories disproved; God's Providence vindicated, and His Gospel taught and revered, unchanged and unchangeable, by the infallible Church, which ever reigns triumphant amid the ruins of man's works and speculations.

You believe in this high destiny of yours, otherwise you were not here to-day; your conscience has impelled you hither; that silent monitor, which ever whispers within you that you were sent to labour in the vineyard of the Lord. And yet, strange fatuity of man! unmoved by the conclusions of reason, and the dictates of religion; untaught by the experience of the past; and submitting to the delusion to which millions have fallen victims before you, you too postpone till to-morrow, till next year, till

some indefinite period of your life, the hour of your conversion to God, as if time were your own, and you could command it; as if your Lord and Judge had never cried out, "Unless you do penance, you shall all perish." To-day He comes forth once more into the highway of life. He has called you at early morning; He has called you at the third hour, at the sixth, at the ninth; He now comes at the eleventh hour, and perhaps for the last time, with pity, with warning, but ever with plenteous mercy; He exclaims to you, "Why stand you here all the day idle?"

And why stand you idle? Because you have a false confidence in God. Because you trust that, somehow or other, you will be saved. It is well then that we should see what kind of foundation for your eternal hopes this false confidence is. I will show you two features of this kind of confidence in God's goodness, which I trust will be sufficient to convince you how unreliable it is. I will show you how foolish it is, and how criminal. If you were convinced that you would be lost for ever, oh! what would be the anguish of your mind. I will prove to you that the presumptuous sinner will be lost for ever unless at the eleventh hour he enters and labours in the vineyard of the Lord. And just behold the folly of his presumption. The habitual sinner must live in the constant apprehension of being lost for ever; for his sinfulness is certain, and his repentance is very uncertain. Without Divine grace he cannot be rescued from sin, and this grace he cannot give himself; it comes from God. Do you intend to die in your sins, or to abandon them? Alas! the former is much more likely to happen than the latter; it is so much easier. It requires no effort to remain in sin, you have only to let corrupt nature have its way, to yield to the impetuosity of your passions, and they will speedily bear you to destruction. You have only to let the poison of sin pass into your soul and kill it. You have not energy to apply an antidote, and your fate will be that of the wicked man described by Job: "His bones shall be filled up with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust." Thus to die in your sins is easy, but to rise from them requires a force from without, a supernatural force, which you cannot apply yourself, and which you can only obtain by flinging yourself at the feet of God and imploring it.

And it is by no ordinary grace that you can be rescued from your sinfulness, but by a singular, a miraculous intervention of Providence; by such a change as excites the surprise of all men, from its suddenness, and its wondrous working: for, remember that the conversion of a hardened sinner is a prodigy of Divine grace, the examples of which are very rare in the world. Who can promise himself the good fortune of a Magdalen, or a penitent thief? We hear of souls from time to time turning themselves to God; we hear that such and such a sinner has been converted; but, alas! how seldom. If God should act according to the ordinary laws of grace, which He has established, you perish: if you are saved from the slough of sin, it must be by some special interposition of His unspeakable mercy. Again, you who persist in sin paralyse the action of God's grace. You wait for God to convert you? You always hope for the coming of this inward change of soul, by which you are to turn to God. And how do you adapt your soul for this salutary change? By placing fresh obstacles in the way of God. How can you expect God to give you His healing grace, if you constantly oppose Him? If you seek the danger every day, every hour of your life, how can you hope that God will deliver you, in spite of yourself? God is ever willing to give grace, but He requires your co-operation. How can a man who is drowning be saved, if, instead of helping his rescue by another, he does all in his power to resist him in his benevolent attempt? The foolish virgins were excluded, because they showed no anxiety to meet their lord when he would come; they neglected to trim their lamps, and to watch: they fell asleep—they were indifferent—and so, when the bridegroom came, they cried, "Lord, lord, open to us!" But he answering said, "Amen, I say to you, I know you not. Watch ye therefore," says Christ, "for ye know not the day or the hour." Do not deceive yourself, O sinner, for the grace of God will not always come of its own accord. Years ago, when you were lost in a vortex of passions, you trusted that the heavenly gift would come at last, and save you. Has it come yet? Has the world lost its charms for you? Have your passions cooled down? Are you a better man or woman to-day, than you were ten years ago? I fear not: and yet you still hope for the coming of this peaceful day. Alas! the delights of sin will be forgotten; and you will

start fresh on the road to Heaven, in the serene sunshine of a soul from which the clouds of temptation will have passed away. Delusive hope! Know you not, that to the sinner grace will not come without tears, and ceaseless importunity—without longing desire and earnest entreaty? Do you ever pray for the grace of conversion? Do you ever ask of God to change your heart? Do you seek to propitiate Him with alms-deeds and good works? Do you ever really and sincerely desire to be converted to the Lord—to enter His vineyard, and work for Him? On the contrary, does not your conscience every day upbraid you with standing idle in the market-place, frittering away precious hours in the pursuits of toys and vanities, which were intended by your Creator to be spent in working for His glory, and your own eternal salvation?

One of the greatest of all graces is the grace of conversion; and yet, this is the grace you expect God, out of His pure bounty, to give you; although you are every day making yourselves more and more unworthy of it. You are unworthy of it, because you persist in sin—because you abuse the lights and inspirations which God is every day shedding over your soul. You despise the instructions, the warnings, the threats, the allurements, the thousand artifices, so to speak, by which He seeks to win you from the love of passing things, to the love of Him who alone is beautiful, good, unchanging, and Eternal. You are unworthy of the grace of conversion, because, you neglect to have recourse to those means by which grace is imparted to the soul. Where is your respect for the Sacraments of Christ? Do you not rush from them as if they were engines of destruction, instead of being mediums of salvation? Is not the bare mention of them, at times, unpleasant, perhaps disgusting, to you? Do you not seek to change the subject to some topic more agreeable to the ears of one whose only pleasure is beneath the sun, and not beyond it? You are unworthy God's grace; because you deride and mock those who are pious and godly. You are unworthy of it, because you repose, in a profound ease and security of soul, heedless of God, of His admonitions and judgments, of His goodness, His mercy, and His love; thus turning your conduct into a perpetual insult to His Almighty Providence! and yet, you are the person who expect that that God is to work one of His greatest miracles

for you—to grant you the grace of being converted—while you are doing all in your power, while you employ every energy of your mind and body—while you turn every moment of your time to place obstacles in His path, to rouse His wrath, and provoke His vengeance on your unhappy head. Truly, then, is this presumption, this false confidence in God's goodness, a folly!

But let us see, for a moment, the pretexts by which a sinner defends his persistence in iniquity. Age, he says, will blunt my passions; they cannot be always thus violent: the maddest fire must burn out at last. Let us grant it. But are you so sure that, when your passions have disappeared, repentance will come for the past? Does it follow, that, if a man can no longer sin, he grieves for having sinned before? No, for the truth is, that the desire to sin survives the capacity to commit it. A man may have a passion without being able to gratify it; and experience proves that the passions only grow stronger by age. Like old trees, they fix themselves year after year more firmly in the ground, and cannot be uprooted except with the ground itself. I speak not of the insult to God implied in the sinner's saying, I will turn to Thee, O God, when I can sin no more: I speak not of the folly of saying, I will be converted next year, or twenty years hence, when we cannot promise ourselves one hour, one second of existence.

The farther you keep from God, the more will He sunder Himself from you; He constantly invites you to come to Him, and you as constantly decline. What can you expect from Him, who has said, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay," but the punishment due to love despised, and favours only treated with ingratitude? Yes, and if terror has still any influence left on your heart, hear what the wise man proclaims, and tremble: "I called," saith the Lord, "and you refused; you have despised all my counsel, and have rejected my reprehension. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock, when that shall come upon you, which you feared. When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction, as a tempest, shall be at hand; when tribulation and distress shall come upon you, then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear; they shall rise in the morning and shall not find me; because they have hated instruction, and received not the fear of the Lord." But you hear these threats with indifference, O

sinner! these appalling words do not disturb the repose of your mind. Alas! this is your crowning misery, that every sting of conscience should be worn away by the friction of sin—that your soul, once keenly sensitive to remorse, should now after years become tranquil and imperturbable to all guilt, and its attendant bitterness. This is the direst visitation God had in store for you, that you should deem a curse a blessing—that you should mistake a calm of conscience for innocence of life, nor dream that it is only the forerunner of that most frightful of tempests, the storm of God's inexorable and inextinguishable wrath. In delivering you over to this desolation of the reprobate, He inflicts the severest penalty of your guilt; He acts according to the extremest rigour of His justice; for if He ever again intended to visit you with His converting grace, it would be by exciting fear and uneasiness in your mind, that you might see your deplorable condition, and cry for mercy. But woe to him who is familiar with sin, and a stranger to sorrow! Sorrow eternal is his doom.

False confidence in God is not only a folly—it is a crime. It is an insult to the wisdom, to the justice, to the mercy of God. It is an insult to His wisdom. For the sinner argues thus:—God is infinitely wise. He has established a system by which He acts towards man in a spirit of infinite wisdom. So far we agree with the sinner. But he goes farther. He says, justifying his sinfulness, God holds in His hands the hearts of men—He can change them in a moment at His pleasure; and so he can change mine. What tribute is this to the wisdom of God, which the sinner praises so much? Is it not rather an insult to the Divine wisdom? Is it not to say that God, although infinitely wise, acts blindly and without discernment? that He will save the presumptuous sinner, as well the humble penitent? that he treats the just and the unjust with the same measure of His bounty? But the sinner insults not only the wisdom but the justice of God; he says—I was born with those weaknesses; they are inherent in my nature; other men are free from them, but I am their victim; God will have it so. My deplorable tendency to sin ought rather to excite God's pity than arm His wrath against me. This is a false reasoning, my Brethren; God is not the cause of your corrupt nature. Sin is the cause of it—it sprung from the crime of Adam, and is fostered



by your own self-indulgence. Again, whatever be the weakness of your nature, you are always master of your passions, otherwise God would doom you beforehand to inevitable destruction, which is inconsistent with the nature of Him, who is infinitely just and good. And, if you are weak, God knows it, and rather than permit you to be lost, He is ready, when you ask Him, to fling around your soul a fortification of graces which all the forces of hell itself cannot undermine. But speak the truth, examine your soul, and be candid; are not these all flimsy excuses you make merely to compromise with your corrupt inclinations; is not the real secret that you love your passions, and that you will not part from them?

The sinner, in fine, insults the mercy of God. Nothing is so common as to hear men say, who are estranged from the ways of piety, "Oh! God is infinitely merciful, He does not will the death of a sinner!" But what does the sinner mean by this exclamation? What balm does he gather from it for his own soul? Does he mean that God never punishes crime? he will scarcely say that: that He never abandons the sinner? Did He not abandon Pharaoh? Did He not abandon Saul and Antiochus? Did He not abandon the impenitent thief while He saved the repentant? Will the sinner say that God will save the drunkard, the immoral man, the avaricious, the proud, and the blasphemer? We all know that nothing defiled can enter heaven; what consolation is this to the sinner? Let him then cease to insult the mercy of God, by saying that such as he can enjoy eternal glory hereafter. Let him rather tremble at the words of God, as recorded in His sacred writings—"add not sin to sin; and say not the mercy of the Lord is great. He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins, for mercy and wrath quickly come from Him, and His wrath looketh upon sinners. Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the day of vengeance He will destroy thee."

I have shown you, my Brethren, the folly and the criminality of the sinner, in presuming on the goodness of God. Will you any longer be guilty of this folly and this crime? Oh! do not delude yourself with the idea that you may be saved. Why should you leave to chance a matter in which all your happiness for eternity is concerned? You

will not be saved without your own co-operation. You must begin the work, and God will perfect it. As you sow, you shall reap: "If you sow in corruption, you shall reap in corruption," saith the Apostle; but if you sow in tears, you shall reap in joy. Why should you put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day? There is no to-morrow for a Christian, "Thou fool, perhaps this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Oh! if thou art to be lost hereafter, how amply will God be able to vindicate His conduct towards you. He will point to the Gospel of this day, and He will say to you, "I was the householder, who went out to hire thee into my vineyard. I went at early morning. In the dawn of thy life I sought thee in baptism; I gave thee my grace. At the third hour, when the light of reason beamed on thy soul, I called thee in the Sacrament of penance. At the sixth hour I invited thee to the banquet of my love in the Holy Eucharist. At the ninth hour I confirmed thee in My grace and My love. But now I come at the eleventh hour, and I find thee here idle. I find with thee many who never heard my voice, or heeded it. Some, who refused my call at early morning, at the sixth, and at the ninth hours; they are thy companions; and thou hast left My vineyard; thou hast obeyed the call and grown weary of the labour; why stand you here all the day idle?" Oh! sinner, if thou art lost, how amply, I repeat, will God's justice and goodness be vindicated by these words? Hear Him then even at the eleventh hour; "If this day you hear the voice of the Lord, harden not your hearts." "Seek ye the Lord," saith the prophet, "while he may be found; call upon him, while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way; and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he is bountiful to forgive." O good and merciful God, soften our hard hearts; illumine our darkened souls, that we may love Thee at length, who alone art worthy of our love; that we may no longer be dazzled by the false glare of worldly pleasure; but that we may see Thee as Thou really art, the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, and that shines on him for all eternity with the effulgence of glory never to be extinguished. Amen.

SERMON

ON CHRISTIAN HOPE.

Gospel—The man cured of the palsy.—JOHN, v.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—Beside the pond of Bethesda, a multitude of men, sick, blind, lame, and withered, lay. They waited from day to day, from month to month, and some from year to year, for the periodical visit of the angel who should descend into the waters and impart to them the healing power. After various periods of ardent hope and bitter disappointment, some were cured, while others lingered on in their infirmity until life and health were scarcely worth recovery. Thus there were two classes of victims ever beside that mysterious pond. There were those who sighed for the coming of the angel, but for whom the angel never came. The angel did come ; but while they were preparing to descend, some others were preferred before them, and their turn never arrived. How were the others more fortunate ? Because they had some one to take them down to the pond just before the waters moved—because they were ever on the watch, and soliciting the aid of some kind friends against the hour of need ; because their hopes of being cured were well founded, while others displayed a reckless indifference to securing the assistance of some by-stander, an indifference which was all the more inconsistent, as they desired to be healed, but neglected the proper means of procuring their recovery. Is it not just so in life ? in this world struck with a universal palsy of soul, where men lie sick, blind, lame, and withered in sin ? Some victims hope, and their hopes are well grounded—they watch and pray ; they set aside as far as possible all worldly cares ; they think only of the **one** object—the moving of the waters of eternal life ; they seek not to

beguile the weary hours of waiting by frivolous pastimes on the bank ; they make all things subserve to a state of preparation for a descent into the healing waters, and when the moment comes, when the Angel of Death arrives (for to the Christian, death is the passage of life), they go down into its saving depths, accompanied by their best friends—the good works which they have practised during life, and pass into a new, happy, glorious, and eternal state of existence. But for very many of those palsied souls, although the light of their hope is never extinguished, and they go on from one period to another ever disappointed, yet ever still expecting the moment of saving immersion, their hope is vain, for it remains a barren, inactive hope ; it does not take form, it does not look for help ; in a word, it is not hope, but presumption ; it is a foolish expectation of salvation without making proper use of the necessary means to obtain it.

My Brethren, I would speak to you of Christian hope, of that sublime virtue of the soul, by which man has ever a well-founded expectation of happiness boundless in extent, and endless in duration ; that aspiring elevation of the spirit, by which she mounts beyond this narrow world, and fixes her abode in the very bosom of her God : that free, expansive, agile gaze, by which she regards this paltry theatre of life as the passing pageant of an hour, and roams abroad in the contemplation of that interminable scene of future bliss, where the God of infinite beauty, and bounty, and love is, at the same time, the Giver and the Gift. I would speak to you of that hope that consoled the patriarchs of old, and all the just that lived from Adam to Christ, according to that of the Psalmist, “In thee, O Lord, have our fathers hoped—they have hoped, and thou hast delivered them ; they cried to thee, and they were saved ; they trusted in thee, and they were not confounded.” I would speak to you of that hope which, in the early days of the Church—for the anchorites converted the desert into a blooming garden, and for the recluse made the cloister a palace of delights—that hope which adorned the sanctuary, and made the scaffold red with the blood of sainted victims ; that hope which sustained a Monica in her prayers, a Jerome in his temptation, a Francis in his poverty, a Teresa in her sufferings, a Xavier in his labours,—who, though in the sight of men they suffered torments,

their hope was full of immortality. Afflicted in few things, in many they were well rewarded. I would speak to you of that hope which is the refuge of the sinful, and the only consolation of the sorrowful, the companion of the desolate, the anchor of the just, the light which cheers and guides us on through the clouds and storms of life, and which is never obscured, until, having led us safely into the haven of salvation, it is transmuted into the light which beams upon the soul for eternity, from the joy-giving countenance of the Almighty.

We will embrace this whole question by considering briefly, yet attentively, three things—namely, what are the objects of our hope; what are the grounds of our hope; what should be the character of our hope—in other words, what do we hope; why do we hope; how should we hope?

And first—What do we hope? We always hope for something which we have not; the sick man hopes for health, the hungry man for food, the poor man for means to live, the ignorant man hopes for knowledge, and so on. By Christian hope we look forward for something which we want in a Christian point of view. There is no Christian who does not want something; and, therefore, there is no Christian who does not hope for something; if a Christian is in a state of sin, he wants grace, and, therefore, grace should be the object of his hope; if he is in a state of grace, he wants perseverance, and, therefore, he should hope for perseverance. Sin and sorrow are the two great causes of want in this life: grace and joy are the two great objects of hope. Every one is a sinner—every one has some sorrow or another; the sinful Christian should hope for grace, the sorrowful Christian should hope for future joy. Now, if there were no hope for man, for sinful, for sorrowing man, how woful would be his state! Estranged for ever from God—banished from His sight, both for time and eternity. Cut off as a branch from the tree, he should rot and wither, and then be cast into eternal fire. The anticipation of that punishment here would render him for ever miserable; for surely, if anything assuages our sorrows in this life, it is the consoling hope that they cannot last for ever, but must at some time give way to peace and joy. The condition of Cain was dreadful, unspeakably dreadful—he lost all hope: “My iniquity,” said he, “is greater than that I should deserve pardon;” and “he went out from the face

of the Lord, and dwelt as a fugitive on the earth"—the self-ejected wanderer, the despairing sinner, the irreclaimable child of sorrow. Such was Cain, and such should we all be if we had not hope.

But to us who are blessed with the possession of that Divine virtue, how different is the aspect of the future? If we fall into sin, we hope to rise from it again by the grace of God; if we relapse into sin, we hope still to rise once more; even if we spent a whole life in the transgression of God's Commandments, not of course in a wilful presumption on His mercy, but yielding to the weakness of human nature, and beguiled by the deceits of the devil, we may still justly hope that God, whose mercy is boundless, will rescue us from ruin; if we are in sorrow and trouble, we hope that it may soon pass away; that even if it continued until the day of our death, it will then cease for ever in that land "where weeping and sorrow shall be no more." The condition of those who hope not, then, is very miserable indeed, for they grope on in rayless darkness through "the night of time," to the endless night of a miserable eternity; or, if they be the sceptic, infidel race, they see no God either here or hereafter, but believe, or persuade themselves they believe, that the moment of death is the moment of annihilation; that for them the sun of life goes down never to rise; that there is no existence beyond the grave. Oh! gloomy thought. While we, trusting that He who drew us from nothingness by His Almighty power, will preserve us by the same power, confiding in His love, in His mercy, in His truth, believe and hope that having here fulfilled His law we shall behold for ever His infinite beauty and splendour, and shall share that infinity of happiness which He has in store for those who love and suffer for Him in this fleeting world.

But is this a vain hope, or is it well grounded? We shall see:—The great ground of our hope is the infinite mercy of God; His infinite love for men. If there were limits to God's mercy, then indeed, like Cain, we might well despair, for perhaps our sins would be greater than that we should desire pardon; but of God's mercy there is no end. Were I to open the pages of the sacred volume, and produce before you the evidences of God's infinite mercy and love for man, I should read from the first word of Genesis to the last word of the Apocalypse, because it

is all one history of God's mercy and God's love. I would show you how, when His loving designs with regard to man were frustrated by man's ingratitude, by Adam's sin, God's love suffered no abatement; but while in the spirit of His justice, He cast Adam out of the garden of pleasure, and doomed him and his posterity to temporal and eternal death, yet in the sweet spirit of His boundless mercy He enkindled in the bosom of the outcast the serene light of hope by the promise of a Redeemer, whose blood should wash out the handwriting of sin: "I will put enmities," said He to the serpent, "between thy seed and her seed (that is, the woman's), she shall crush thy head." I would show you, how when Sodom and Gomorrah had provoked His wrath by the perpetration of nameless iniquities He yet would have spared them from fire and brimstone, at the prayer of Abraham, if only ten just men could have been found within their walls. I should repeat for you the words which He uttered to Moses on the mountain, that He shows mercy to thousands of those that love Him, and that keep his commandments. I would recite for you the Psalms of David, whose constant theme, through every varying form of praise, is the infinite mercy of our God, that mercy which is above all His works, that mercy which endureth for ever. With him I would cry out, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and never forget all he hath done for thee, who forgiveth all thy iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases: who redeemeth thy life from destruction: who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion: the Lord is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy: and as a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him: the mercy of the Lord is from eternity to eternity to them that fear him." But why multiply proofs of what is so manifest—why direct your attention to any one particular passage for a proof of that mercy which breathes like a sweet incense from every page of God's sacred Word? Such is the mercy of the invisible God in the invisible world—let us see of what kind was His mercy when He dwelt amongst the children of men. In the fulness of time He came, in poverty, that the poor might have hope; He came in sufferings, that breaking hearts might be consoled; He shared the wretchedness of the poor that they might share the riches of His glory. He partook of their sorrows with the

children of sorrow, that they might participate in His joy. "Come to me," He cries, "all you who labour and are heavy laden;" heavy laden with sin or sorrow; "come to me, and I will refresh you:" "Nay, even blessed are the sorrowful. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance. He would have mercy and not sacrifice. He courted the society of sinners, and dispensed His graces amongst them. He loved to be with the sorrowful, that He might dispel their sorrow,—as He wept with sympathy for the sisters of Lazarus, He no doubt smiled with them in their joy on the resurrection of their brother. Who restored the widow's son to life? Was it not Jesus? Who forgave the Magdalen? Was it not Jesus? Who was the father of the prodigal child? Who cleansed the leper? Who restored sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf? Who fed the hungry on the mountain? Who was the good shepherd that left the ninety-nine sheep in the desert, and sought the one that went astray? Was it not Jesus? Here are the grounds of our hope. Are you satisfied with them? But they are still stronger. Did He not die upon a cross, and shed even the last drop of His blood for our sakes, that we might have hope in His merits? And even during the death agony which transfixed His soul on that occasion was not mercy the last act of His life, the last thought of His mind, the last utterance of His lips? "This day," said He to the penitent thief, "thou shalt be with me in paradise:" "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," said He in extenuation of the wickedness of His executioners; that is, not only of those who physically caused His death-pangs, but of us who by our sins crucify Him again every day of our lives.

Even after His death, and resurrection, and ascension into heaven, He is still the foundation of our hope. "He is at the right hand of God," as St. Paul says, "making intercession for us." Oh! my Brethren, truly our hopes are well grounded, for they are grounded on the mercy, on the truth of God—on infinite mercy, and infallible truth—they are grounded on the superabundant merits of Christ, the beloved Son of His Eternal Father, in Whom He is well pleased.

But lastly, we must inquire what should be the character of our hope—how should we hope? I answer, that our hope, like our faith, must not lie dormant; it must be active; it must fructify in good works—"By our fruits we shall be known." He who hopes that, as God is infinitely merciful, he has nothing to fear, does not hope, but he presumes on the mercy of God; he offends God, because God is merciful—that is to say, he makes God's attributes ancillary to his guilt. Let such a man beware of that hardness of heart which is the worst punishment God inflicts on man in this life—the desert to which the soul is relegated, beyond the reach of grace, or pardon: let him remember that the Son of man will come at the hour He is not looked for, and when a life of presumption may terminate in a death-bed of despair. Nor let your hope be like the hope of worldlings, a weak, flickering flame, quickened into a spasmodic life by the occasional breathings of a disturbed conscience, but lapsing into darkness before every new glare of the world's pleasure-scenes. The child of pleasure, when pleasure wearies, lifts his eyes to heaven, and sighs for the peace which is there: he would fly up with wings of hope, but his wings are clogged with the mire of worldliness, and he falls to earth again. A gleam of heaven's delight is enkindled in his soul for a moment, and he hopes to gain it; but then he thinks how hard is the task, and the light is quenched as soon as it is enkindled. An eternity of happiness sacrificed for the fleeting pleasures of an hour! Hope is not a mere feeling of the mind; not a mere confidence in the mercy of God; it is not that state of the soul indicated by some people when they say, after falling into sin, "Oh! God is good, and He will pardon me." No: hope is a well-founded expectation of being saved, after we have done all in our power towards our salvation: it is that desire of the soul, by which she sighs for God above all things, by which she eagerly longs to be with Him, and to enjoy Him—by which she would willingly endure any loss, even that of life itself, before she would be content to lose her God. It is that disposition of the soul, by which she has no confidence in the aid of man, but places all her reliance in God; that feeling that animated the breast of David, when he said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with sword, and shield, and spear, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of

Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." "Blessed is he," says the Psalmist, "whose hope is the name of the Lord." Such should be our hope, strong, but not presumptuous; resting on the infinite mercy, and the unerring promises of God. I have said that the merits of Christ are superabundant; that is to say, as by the least suffering He could have amply atoned, so by His multiplied sufferings He has atoned beyond measure. From this infinite atonement, some heretics argue that man is saved by faith alone—that he cannot merit anything by good works, as Christ's merits are more than sufficient for man's salvation. This is not the place to show the falsity of that doctrine: for me, it is sufficient to tell you, that the teaching of the Catholic Church is different—it assures us that, in order that we should be saved, those merits of Christ must be applied to our souls; that He will have suffered in vain for us, unless we have that application of His merits made to us by good works, and by the reception of the Sacraments. Hence, we are not saved by a torpid faith, by an inactive hope, but by those virtues animated by charity, by the love of God, by a patient endurance of troubles and afflictions for God's sake, and by a worthy reception of the Sacraments—these channels through which the merits of Christ are applied to our souls; through which His graces flow to us, and replenishing us with love, enliven our faith, and reanimate our hope, making both effective to our resurrection on the last day, with an undying life in the enjoyment of eternal glory. Sinners, therefore, and sorrowers, here is your consolation, the sweet consolation of Christian hope, the well-grounded assurance that your sins will be forgiven, and that your sorrows will be turned into joy. Were your sins as red as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow. Were your sorrows as great as ever tested human endurance, they would not be proportioned to the measure of glory that shall hereafter be revealed in you.

Live then for ever in hope. Say, with the Psalmist, "Thou, O Lord, art my protector, and my refuge, my God, and I will trust in thee." He who has no hope is like a shipwrecked mariner at night, when the clouds have obscured the stars; while the Christian, animated by this Divine virtue, sails safely abroad over the tranquil deep, in the purest sunlight of heaven. Hope is a bright angel

that loves to hang in the wake of those whose souls are clouded with sin, and whose hearts are burdened with sorrow. Where poverty and affliction take up their abodes, there the bright spirit comes to shed a cheering ray. In the prison cell she whispers to the captive that the day of freedom is coming fast, and the gloom of his dungeon is brightened for a moment. In the dreary desolate chamber, where some lone sufferer pines beneath the withering shadows of hunger, and disease, and neglect, she comes and tells that this cannot last—that some human consoler is at hand; or should humanity still prove forgetful, that God, the infinitely loving, and merciful, and bounteous God, will soon replenish that hungry soul with the plenty of His house; that the parching tongue will soon be satiated with the waters that flow by His eternal throne; that the gaunt shadow of disease shall be dispelled by the brightness of eternal life, and joy become the inheritance for ever of the solitary sorrower. Hope loves to visit the death-bed of the Christian, and never quits it until the soul is fled, and her duty is done. When the heart is almost pulseless, and the limbs stark and stiff, and growing cold, and the tide of life is ebbing, hope directs the flickering glance of the gradually darkening eye to that vista of heavenly glories through which the soul is soon to pass, and beyond which she shall repose for ever. The last throb of the heart is a throb of hope—the last sparkle of the eye is enkindled by hope. Hope accompanies the disembodied spirit to the very gate of paradise, and with a smile of triumph hands her over for ever to joy.

May such be our end! When life's last hour is come, and the shadows of the past are fleeting!—when nought remains to us but the memories of sin, and the fears of judgment, may hope stand by our bedside, to chase those memories, and to dispel those fears. May she cheer us on in that trying hour, and make its sorrows light, and its bitterness not so bitter. May our hearts be enabled to feel, though our lips may not be able to utter, the sentiment of the Psalmist, "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded for ever." Then may we pass for ever into that happy land, where the sorrowful cease to mourn, and where the weary are at rest; thus experiencing for eternity the truth of the Divine promise, that mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord. Amen.

SERMON

ON ALL SOULS' DAY.

“It is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.”—2 MACH. xii. 46.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—The annual return of All Souls' Day, which has just gone by, reminds us of one of our most serious religious obligations, namely the obligation of praying that such of our brethren who have died in the faith of the Lord may be rescued by Him from the temporary punishment which they endure for their sins, and that they may be restored to the heaven which awaits them as an eternal reward for the virtues they practised during their mortal career upon this earth; for, that there is in the next life a place or state of punishment where such souls suffer, no Christian is permitted to doubt. Indeed amongst all the dogmas of our holy faith there is not one more clearly proved nor more consoling than this. Supposing that no such place existed, what could be more painful for us than to feel that we should never again cast a thought upon those whom we so tenderly loved during life; to think that at the moment of their death all connexion between them and us is severed for ever; that, considering their mortal frailty, and the circumstances of their death, they perhaps suffer eternal torments for their sins; or that, should they be so happy as to have passed without delay into the kingdom of God's glory, they sing His eternal praises, indifferent to us, and to our prayers, notwithstanding the tenderness and love they manifested to us while dwelling here below! And yet such is the faith of those who differ from us in religion. The moment their friend, father, mother, brother or sister dies, they know not whither the soul of the lost one is gone.

Knowing the weakness of that soul during life, remembering the many sins it had committed, considering that death came suddenly without warning, that the hour came when it was least expected, and when the suffering, perhaps unconscious patient had no thought either of time or of eternity, the serious must ever doubt whether that soul is reigning with God, or suffering the eternal torments of hell. And even though they had a confidence that their deceased friend was happy with God for ever, yet, their religion teaches them that they need never address to them a single prayer, a solitary aspiration; for in the intercession of the Saints with God, they have no faith: and thus, no matter how dear that friend may have been, though it might have been the darling child of its mother, who a thousand times had clasped the lost one to her bosom in transports of love, yet, once the hour of death is past, the strings of that love are for ever snapt asunder—child and mother part; between them no community of thought or of interest ever again shall pass; they shall perhaps never meet even beyond the grave. Oh! gloomy thought; rank as the heresy that gave it birth.

But, for us who have the happiness to enjoy the true faith, how sweet, how consoling, is the doctrine professed by our Church in this subject. Considering the infinite mercy of God, we have a strong confidence that all our fellow-creatures who die in the faith of the Lord, fortified with the Sacraments of the Church, received either in fact or in desire, if they do not pass at once to the happiness of heaven, yet escaping the eternal torments of hell, suffer for some time in purgatory, where they may be consoled and relieved, and whence they may be at length delivered by our prayers. Though they be dead, they still live to us; we are interested in them as much as if they still moved amongst us; and when they are permitted by God to pass into the kingdom of His glory, they pray for us to Him without ceasing, that He may give us the grace to live so that we may meet them and be happy with them through all the ages of eternity. Oh! consoling thought, which takes from the grave the victory and from death the sting! Oh! blessed communion of Saints—by which all the children of God are united in spirit, whether militant on earth, suffering in purgatory or triumphant in heaven. Oh! happy invention of the Divine goodness,

by which we escape eternal torments, and become purified from the dross of earth; and made fit to shine like the stars in the firmament of heaven.

My Brethren, although your faith in the doctrine of purgatory is strong and unshaken, yet, as it behoves all Christians to give an account of the faith that is in them, I will briefly explain to you the grounds on which this belief is based, and why it has ever been the clear and explicit teaching of the Holy Catholic Church.

We read in the Book of Machabees, that Judas-Machabeus sent 12,000 drachms of silver to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and rejoicing at the resurrection; for if he had not hoped that they who were dead should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead; and because he had considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them, "it is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." Nothing could be more explicit than this. Purgatory is, according to the Fathers of the Church, that place of exile and suffering, that prison, whence no man shall be released until he pay the "last farthing." Hell is a prison, but the debt of guilt there can never be paid; and therefore another place of punishment must exist, where the last farthing of the debt of sin must and will be exacted. Again, St. Paul says, that in the next life "Every man's work shall be manifest, for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15). In these words purgatory is most clearly, and most unmistakably described. We are assured by the Sacred Scriptures that nothing defiled shall enter into the holy city of the heavenly Jerusalem—"nothing defiled." Hence, if there is no place of purification, it follows that the just man, who has lived all his life in grace, and dies after committing one venial sin, is lost for ever, since venial sin being a defilement he cannot enter into heaven. Monstrous thought! unworthy of the goodness, mercy, and love of the Almighty. If

there be no purgatory, it follows that nearly every one is damned, for every one dies with some defilement of the soul, except children after baptism; martyrs, who are purified in their own blood, or penitents, who, by years of mortification and self-punishment, have blotted out the last vestige of guilt from their souls. But the good and loving God has willed that, in the next life, such of us as shall quit this world still stained with guilt, or not having fully atoned for our sins, shall suffer, and be purified from the last blemish that defiles the soul, until we become worthy to reign for ever with the bright spirits that surround His celestial throne! Again, "Whosoever," says He, "shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven to him; but whosoever shall speak a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven to him, either in this world or in the next." Now, in the next life, no sin can be forgiven in heaven, because no sin exists there, nor in hell, for out of hell there is no redemption; therefore, it follows, that some third place exists, where sin may be forgiven; that place, doubtless, is purgatory.

I have thought it right, my Brethren, to lay down this much of the grounds on which the Church has built her faith in the existence of purgatory, in order that you may more firmly believe in this great truth; that your hope of eternal life may be strengthened by knowing that such a place exists, where you may make sufficient atonement to God for the sins you may not cancel in this life; and that your charity may be so inflamed that you may relieve, by your prayers, alms, and good works, these poor souls that there suffer for their sins, and wait patiently for your prayers, which may release them from their sufferings, and restore them to the eternal enjoyment of their God.

My Brethren, in order that you may understand the nature of your obligation toward the suffering souls in purgatory, I will show you that it is one of the most serious obligations imposed on us by the virtue of charity, whether we regard that virtue as the love of God, of ourselves, or of our neighbours. By praying for the dead, we further the interests of God, because the dearest interest of God is to receive glory from his creatures; and by our prayers for the dead we do all in our power to add new members to the celestial choirs, who chant His praises in heaven.

That souls created to His likeness, and so tenderly loved by Him, should suffer such dreadful pangs, must, as it were, do violence to the heart of God. For what does God see in purgatory? He sees souls which He loves, with all the tenderness of His Divine love, and yet whose torments His justice forbids Him to alleviate. Souls filled with merits, adorned with grace, replete with virtues, whom He cannot yet reward—the souls of His elect, espoused by His Divine Son, which he is bound by His justice to strike with the scourge of His wrath. What violence must this conflict between justice and love cause in the bosom of the merciful Father of the Faithful? By praying for the dead we, as it were, release God from this difficulty. We pray, and His mercy is moved to forgiveness. We entreat Him for the poor suffering souls of our deceased brethren, and His Divine heart is moved to compassion. He looks benignly on the victims of sin, expiating their guilt in those fiery flames; and yielding to the violence of our prayers, He takes them by the hand, and leads them into the eternal mansions of the blessed. In the next life God's justice alone prevails; in this His mercy abounds. His justice forbids Him to give the least comfort to the suffering souls of the faithful; but His mercy permits us to do so. We console them by our prayers—by our alms—by our fasting. We thus give glory to God, by affording to His creatures those consolations which He is Himself forbidden by His justice to impart. Thus, by praying for the dead, we further the dearest interests of God. We also further our own interests, for every soul that we release by our prayers from the flames of purgatory will, in a spirit of gratitude, do violence to the throne of heaven in our behalf.

But, my Brethren, the strongest motive that should induce us to pray for the dead is a sense of compassion for the fearful sufferings they endure before they are permitted to behold the face of God. Of the nature of these sufferings we have no conception. Could we form some notion of the enormity of sin, we might be able to conceive the punishment which it deserves; but we commit it so often, we have become so familiarized with the monster, that for us it has horrors no longer, and we know not how hideous it is in the sight of God, or how fearfully it awakes His vengeance and His wrath. We are assured by the Fathers of the Church, and it is in the Church a constant tradition,

that Purgatory is a place of fire, and that the flames are the same as those in which the damned suffer in hell. Indeed, the sufferings of the just in Purgatory and the damned in hell are exactly alike in all respects but one, and that is the extent of their duration. The flames of Purgatory cease, but those of Hell, enkindled by the wrath of God, shall burn as long as He shall reign in heaven. Excruciating, however, as those torments are, they are as nothing in comparison to what is called the loss of light, which, of all other sufferings, is the most agonizing to the departed soul. Cut off for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years from God, whom it has at length learned to know and to love, denied His company, His consolation, His vision, dwelling in a land of darkness and solitude and pain, the soul in purgatory suffers the most unspeakable woe. Let me ask you, for a moment, to strive to realize this agonizing sense of loss. Imagine yourself in this life banished for a great period of your lives, say twenty years, to a foreign land, a land where you should toil without a shade or canopy beneath the burning rays of a torrid sun. During that long and melancholy period of your lives, you are not permitted to open your lips, to exchange one word with a fellow-creature, but, cowering beneath the lash of a task-master, you toil and sweat monotonously on from day to day. The labour and the heat, and the cruel sufferings are more bitter even than death itself; but worse, far worse, are the solitary thoughts that haunt your soul in that far-distant land; you think of the tender mother, of the afflicted father, of the beloved brother, sister, children, from whom you have been so rudely dragged away. From day to day, from year to year, you sigh and think of those dear distant friends. You never hear of them during your long pilgrimage; you know not whether they are dead or living, whether you shall ever more see one of them again; and even should you see them in the end, how changed will they be! Alas! no longer the same, but careworn, old, and heedless of all the joys that this world can give! What tongue can paint the agonies of those twenty long, dreary years, the bitterest ingredient in which is the same sad, ever-haunting lonely thought that you have no one to love, that those whom you do love are so far away, and that the chances are that on earth you shall never again behold them! If

such be the pain of loss on earth, what must it be to the suffering soul in purgatory? Banished, exiled for a hundred, perhaps a thousand years, nay, perhaps until the great judgment day, from all communion either with God or man; with no one to cheer, no one to console her, apparently forgotten and cast aside, recognising God as the only source of happiness; seeing now in all the light of the other life His infinite sweetness, goodness, love, borne on towards Him, as the torrent is borne on irresistibly to the ocean, and yet unable to attain her goal, the poor soul endures bitterness and torture of which the saddest tears ever shed by mortal in this life have been but a mockery of interpretation. And who are they, my Brethren, that endure those bitter woes? They are, many of them, your own nearest and once dearest friends. Parents, they are the children whom God has lately taken from your festive tables and your pleasant firesides; the children whom you cherished as your own lives, for whose cut fingers you would have bartered your own right hand; whose slightest trouble shed a shadow and gloom over your minds; for whom you would have freely sacrificed your very lives. Children, they are your parents, the parents who brought you up in tenderness and love, and whom you loved with all the yearning affection of your young hearts. Aye, and what perhaps is more pitiful still, there are many poor souls enduring those frightful tortures, both of pain and loss, who never knew, even on earth, the charms of friendship or congenial love, whose sadness and affliction, while they lived, seemed to point them out as special marks for the wrath of God, and who now must languish in their dark prison for centuries before one ray of consolation shall beam upon their chastened souls. There are those who died when all who knew them had passed away, and who, dying, did not leave one behind to say "The Lord have mercy on their souls." There are those who went down into the deep sea in the dead of night, unknown or forgotten, for whose eternal rest no prayer of a friend shall ever ascend before the throne of God; there are the soldiers who died in battle in foreign lands, of whose death no one knows, or cares to know, and for whom no requiem shall ever be sung, for whom no Pater Noster or Ave Maria shall ever appeal to heaven. Oh! my Brethren, how well may we suppose these poor souls to cry out in the words of the

Prophet Jeremias, "All ye who pass by the way, attend and see is there any sorrow like unto our sorrow." They cry out to us to ease their sorrows, to alleviate their woes, to shorten their imprisonment by our prayers to God ; but they cry in vain, we heed them not. In the words of Job, each one of them cries out to us, "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me." Parents, have you no compassion for your suffering children, whose slightest pang you were fain to soothe while they dwelt amongst you ? Children, is your love for your parents to terminate just at the moment that their real sufferings commence ? When they were dying you propped their pillows, and poured the balm of consolation into their breaking hearts. Is your solicitude to cease when they really want your assistance ? Death is but a painted affliction in comparison to what they suffer now. What says St. Cyril on this subject ? "If all the woes, and torments, and afflictions that could be conceived in this world were united together, in comparison to the pains of purgatory they would be even a sweet consolation." And those are the sufferings your nearest and dearest friends endure. "Have pity on me," they exclaim, "have pity on me, at least you my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me."

And what of those who have no friends ? Will you pay no heed to their entreaties ? You would throw a penny to a beggar in the street to alleviate a mere passing trouble, to supply a trifling want ; will you be deaf to the voice of those sufferings which in one moment exceed all the agonies of a lifetime here ? Oh ! my Brethren, our indifference to the dead is cruel in the extreme ! Their case will probably be ours, and that very, very soon. What will be our agony, then, if we find that of all those who knew us on earth, not one ever cares to remember us in that land of woe ; that no one is found to utter a "Lord, have mercy on our souls !" What would you think of a man who, passing by the bank of a river and seeing a fellow-creature drowning, would not stretch out a hand to save him, when only a hand would do it ? Would you not denounce him as more than a barbarian ? And what will you think of yourselves, when you pass by the way, when you see your fellow-creatures bathed in an ocean of fire, and never utter one "Our Father" for their souls, when that one prayer

might snatch them from the abyss, and restore them to the eternal joys of Heaven? It is, perhaps, not so much through cruelty as want of thought. Henceforward then, my Brethren, resolve never to forget this great duty of charity to your afflicted brethren in Purgatory. Whenever you pray, strive to remember them, at morning and at night, in all your prayers and aspirations to God. Imitate the Church in her solicitude for the dead. To almost all the prayers in her Liturgy is appended some short appeal for those who died in the Lord, that they may be loosed from their sins; and on one day in each year, throughout the whole world, she stretches forth the hands of her children in entreaty to the Lord. From every altar of her churches ascends a heartfelt prayer that mercy may be extended to the dead. Joining with her, let us beg of God that He may grant them eternal rest in the bosom of His glory; that in His infinite mercy He may restore them to that land where weeping and sorrow shall be no more, and where they may intercede in turn for us, that quitting this valley of tears we may taste the eternal sweetness of God in the kingdom of His glory."

SERMON

ON THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

“My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: because he hath regard to the humility of his handmaid, therefore shall all generations call me blessed: because he that is mighty hath done great things for me, and holy is his name.”—LUKE, i. 45.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—The end of all religion is to give glory to God; for this, in every age, temples have been erected; for this Bishops and Priests have been consecrated to the Divine service; for this Hermits and Anchorites have made the caves of the desert resound with sighs of repentance and hymns of praise; for this the pious children of the universal Church never cease to work and pray. It is to proclaim the glory of the Lord that we are assembled here to-night—to announce the wonders of His mercy and His love. We join with the whole Church, during these eight days, in celebrating one of the greatest events in which God’s glory has ever been shown forth—the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the commemoration of this event, we honour her whom God has so signally distinguished above all the children of the human race; but to Him is all the glory and all the praise, “To the King of ages, immortal and invisible—to God alone be honour and glory for ever!”—(Ep. Tim.) While we honour the Saints we honour God, because in their heroic deeds the marvels of His grace shine forth. “God,” says the Psalmist, “is wonderful in his saints,” and the greater their works the more superhuman their strength, the purer their lives, the more magnificently are displayed the power and glory of Him by whose grace they attained so exalted a degree of

perfection. Of all the Saints of God, Mary, His mother, was the greatest; she was not only spotless in her very Conception—not only sinless in her whole life, but every grace and spiritual privilege that was ever possessed by any Saint she enjoyed in a supereminent degree: and yet, not to her is the glory of this sanctity, but to God. “My soul,” she cries, “doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid, therefore shall all generations call me blessed; because he that is mighty hath done great things for me, and holy is his name.” In celebrating, therefore, her Immaculate Conception, we join with her in giving praise to Him who conferred on her that stupendous honour; from Whose hands she issued, without any merit of her own, as the ray issues from the sun, bright, pure, and perfect.

As the myriad spectators who pass by the way behold some world’s wonder of architectural beauty and magnificence, and exclaim in amazement, how great was the genius of him who designed it! so does all humanity gaze with astonishment at the immaculate temple of the Holy Ghost, this Virgin, pure even in her Conception, in whose soul every grace shines forth with lustre truly heavenly, and glorifies the Creator, who fashioned a being of perfection so marvellous, so unrivalled. For, however Mary may have merited grace and glory, like the other Saints, from the first dawn of her reason her Immaculate Conception was a purely gratuitous gift of God, irrespective of all her future merits. But for God, Mary would have been like any of ourselves, weak and sinful; and, in point of fact, she was sentenced, as we were, to the guilt and penalties of original sin, and was rescued from them only by the very same means that we were—namely, the merits of a suffering God. We were saved from sin after falling into it; Mary was so saved that she never fell into it, even in her Conception being spotless. Therefore does she say, “My spirit hath rejoiced in God my *Saviour*, because he that is mighty hath done great things for me, and holy is his name.” Yes, great things indeed hath He done for her; He saved her from the slough of sin, into which all mankind were cast; He beautified and adorned her, and made her all fair; to be His own mother; to be the second Eve; the reparatrix of man’s lost happiness; the casket into

which all the jewels of His grace were to repose ; the star of the sea, which was to reflect on men all the beauty and glory of the Sun of Justice ; the model on which the whole human race might fashion their souls for future glory : in a word, the soul in which God's Holy Spirit found its most gorgeous, its best-beloved sanctuary, as the Son of God found her chaste womb the choicest resting-place for His Divinity.

My Brethren, it has ever been the belief of the Catholic Church, and is now an article of our holy faith, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived in her mother's womb without the slightest stain of sin. This was the first step taken by God in the work of our Redemption, the preparation of a pure being, who would be worthy to bring His Divine Son into the world, that He might shed His blood for man's salvation. We, therefore, share with her the honour we give to God, in recognition of the great blessing of our deliverance from sin and hell.

As she was to bring forth Him who was purity itself, it was only in accordance with His honour that she should be the purest of all beings, that she should be free from all taint of sin, which He came to destroy. When God directed in the old law that a temple should be raised in His honour, where He was to reside, not in substance, but only in figure, what splendour, what magnificence did He exact in its construction, and in its preparation for His service ! David was a great Saint, one of God's most chosen servants, a man whom He signalized most magnificently by the choicest favours of His mercy and His love ; and yet, because David's hands were imbrued with the blood of battles, however justly fought, God did not permit him to erect a temple to His honour ; that exalted privilege was reserved for Solomon, the wisest of men, and the richest of monarchs. And when the temple was finished, what purifications, what consecrations, what rites and ceremonies were deemed necessary for that edifice, where only sacrifices were to be offered to the Most High ! But Mary was a creature fashioned by the Divine Artificer Himself, in whose body His Divine Son was to receive His conception ; in which He was not figuratively, but substantially, to reside, which was the flesh and blood of which His were to be formed. Oh ! what tongue can tell, what mind can con-

ceive her purity, her holiness ? what language can exaggerate it, what homage can venerate it sufficiently ?

We, in our weakness of intellect here below, can scarcely imagine the wonder of Divine grace by which God exempted Mary from the stain of original sin ; but we may form some notion of it from considering the evils wrought by sin in the world, from which she was rescued by His grace. The holiest men that ever lived, His most cherished and beloved servants, were all conceived in sin ; the great Abraham, the father of God's chosen people ; Moses, with whom the Lord spoke on Mount Sinai as a man is wont to speak with his friend ; the patient Job ; the holy David, who exclaimed, " Behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me." St. John the Baptist, who was sent as an angel before the face of the Redeemer, to prepare the way for Him, was conceived in sin ; so was the beloved disciple of Jesus ; so were Peter and Paul, his two chief apostles ; so, in a word, were all the children of men born children of wrath. Sin was a universal plague, spreading contagion all around—a disease congenital to our souls from the earliest dawn of our existence ; a sea in which all were alike immersed ; a prison in which all were confined ; a cloud enveloping in impenetrable darkness the souls of all the children of Adam ! Mary alone was saved from the general malady. " Thou art all fair, my beloved, and there is no stain in thee." She alone rose triumphant over sin's destructive sea ; like the ark of Noah, to which she has been justly compared, the only thing of earth that escaped the universal deluge ; she alone was not imprisoned within the walls of guilt ; for, in the words of the Psalmist, she could say to the Almighty, " But this I know, that thou hast a good will for me, because my enemy shall not rejoice over me." She alone was not obscured in the all-embracing cloud, or, rather, she alone burst out from above it on the world, bright and spotless, the herald of the Sun of Justice ; the precursor of infinite purity ; the harbinger of eternal light and life ! " Who is she that cometh forth as the morning, rising fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array ?" Such may we suppose to have been the ecstatic language of the Angels, when, after the long night of sin, clouds and spiritual darkness, they be-

held Mary, the mother of the coming Redeemer, bursting into light, fair as the moon in the purity of her innocence, bright as the sun in the ardour of her love, terrible as an army with serried ranks, with burnished helmets, and glistening lances, coming forward to do battle with the hereditary foes of mankind, the powers of hell, and the tyranny of sin, ushering in the Saviour, the God of hosts, who would scatter the legions of Lucifer; the Prince of Peace, who would blot out the handwriting of sin, and open to lost man the gates of heaven, so long closed; the God of love, who would cast upon the earth the fire of His charity which should never be extinguished. It is by considering Mary thus, that we form some idea of her rare prerogatives and her exalted dignity; by viewing her as the parent to us of all those graces and blessings without which we should inevitably be lost for ever, and by the aid of which we may attain immortal glory and happiness with our God.

If we did not know for certain, by the constant and universal teaching of God's Church, that the Blessed Virgin was conceived immaculate, we should satisfy ourselves that it was true, by barely considering that nothing was more natural and necessary for God's honour than that she should be so conceived; for, could anything be more abhorrent to our feelings than to suppose that the Son of God was born of a sinful woman, of a woman that ever knew guilt against Him? Would it not be a reproach to Him that His flesh was the flesh of one tainted with iniquity? The God of infinite purity could not, consistently with His honour and dignity, be born of a woman unless she was the purest and most spotless being that ever issued from His hands; for, increate wisdom could not reside in a tainted abode. Of this we are assured by the wise man, who says—"Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins" (Wisd. i. 4). Mary, therefore, who was destined from all eternity to be the Mother of God, was fitted by Him with every possible grace; was fashioned by Him the purest of creatures, that she might be worthy of so exalted, so unparalleled a dignity. "A bad tree cannot bear good fruit." How could a mother bring forth infinite purity unless she was herself at all times pure? And who will say that God could not save her from the malediction

pronounced by Him on the whole human race? Who will say that He could not, consistently with His truth, make her an exception? Who will say that a pure scion could not, by a special privilege, branch off from an impure stock? *Thou*, inspired Job, canst answer the question. "Who can make him clean, that is conceived of unclean seed? is it not thou who only art?" Yes, God made Mary an exception to the whole human race, that she might be a worthy mother to His only Son. Alas! for the faith of those who will allow Mary no grace, no degree of purity above the other daughters of Adam. Is it possible that the Mother of the Great God should be only like the rest of women, infirm of nature, and prone to sin? On the contrary, as she was the only being selected from the myriads to be His mother, is it not reasonable that she should be distinguished from all the children of men by some characteristic of peculiar greatness? Now, it is only by grace we are great in the sight of God; and the Immaculate Conception was the only grace by which the Blessed Virgin could be possibly distinguished from the rest of the human race; for, if she were born in sin, or conceived in it, she would differ from no human being; if she led a life of great sanctity, she could be only called the greatest of the Saints, but would be like to them, a creature working, praying, and meriting before God. But by her being conceived without sin, God marked her out by a most striking, unmistakable peculiarity, by a most splendid dignity, not vouchsafed even to the dearest souls He ever created—a dignity which brings her nearest to Himself, and farthest from Humanity, like some brilliant star in the midst of the firmament at the footstool of the Almighty, attracting the gaze, and winning the admiration of all the world's wayfarers.

These sentiments in relation to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary have prevailed in the Church from its earliest foundation, and have never received any serious contradiction. For that reason, the Church did not think proper to define it as an article of faith, because the Church, for the most part, never proceeds to defining Dogmas unless when the truth of her universal teaching is impugned by contumacious heretics; but in these latter years the devotion to the Blessed Virgin became so intense in the Church that there sprang up a general desire that the

doctrine of the Immaculate Conception should be settled on a fixed, indisputable, and everlasting basis of belief; and therefore the illustrious Pontiff who now guides, under God, the destinies of the Church, deemed it fit to conform to the prevailing wish of all his spiritual Children. He accordingly pronounced with infallible voice, and with the enthusiastic approbation of the universal Church in every region of the earth, that "It is revealed by God, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was in the first moment of her conception, by a singular privilege from God, free from all stain of sin, and that this doctrine must, therefore, be firmly and for ever believed by the faithful." And if only in consideration of this tribute on the part of the great Pontiff to the holy Mother of God, setting aside His numerous other claims to our love and veneration, may we not this night justly express a hope, and pour forth a prayer, that she whom he has so much honoured, and whose Divine Son he has so gloriously represented through troubles and afflictions seldom paralleled in the history of the Church, may protect him from the enemies that beset his throne, his honour, and his life? that she may not suffer the grey hairs of the Great Old Man to descend in sorrow to the grave, but by her powerful intercession may she deliver him from the dangers that encompass him, and steer him safely over the sea of which she is the guiding-star? that He may present to mankind an instance of patience, meekness, and resignation, triumphant, even on the verge of the grave, over all the fiery darts of the wicked one, over all the combined powers of Earth and Hell?

Now, my Brethren, for all the graces and blessings God has bestowed on the Blessed Virgin Mary, and particularly for the grace of her Immaculate Conception, to Him be all honour and glory. Although, however, God be thus supremely and strictly speaking alone worthy of honour, He yet permits us to pay some honour to certain of His creatures, and to all according to their dignity and merit. Thus, we are commanded by Him to "honour our father and mother." True, finally all honour redounds to God, because without His grace the greatest Saint that ever lived might have been the greatest sinner. "There is no crime," says St. Augustine, "that any one ever committed, which any other man may not commit, unless prevented by

the grace of God." We honour the Saints, because by complying with His graces they proved themselves faithful servants to Him; they merited God's approval; they merited the enjoyment of His rewards: why should they not merit our honour, our esteem, our praise? But we honour the Blessed Virgin, not so much because by complying with God's grace during her life she merited His love, and in so far was on a par with the other Saints; no, but we honour her specially because she was the Mother of God, and by this dignity stood above all the other Saints by an inconceivable height of grandeur. We never speak of her as Saint Mary—we say Mary, the Mother of God. The graces which she received from God to qualify her for this dignity were purely His gifts, and had no reference to her merits, because she could not merit until she existed. He selected her from the whole human race to be the mother of His Divine Son, and enriched her, even to overflowing, with his choicest gifts and graces, that she might be adapted for the sustainment of that transcendent dignity. "Hail," said the angel to her, "hail, Mary, full of grace." She would not be full of grace if any grace was wanting to her; and that is another reason for confessing that she did not want the grace of Immaculate Conception. Even in a worldly sense, there was no honour of which she was not worthy, for she was the lineal descendant of the oldest and most glorious monarchical line in the World.

If God Himself, therefore, so much honoured her, what ought to be the expression of our honour? Will we honour the representatives of wealth, of the wretched dross of this world's pelf, and refuse to honour Her who was the mother of infinite riches, and is the possessor of all the wealth of heaven? Will men bow down before beauty, and sacrifice their very souls upon its unhallowed altar, and fail to do homage to her who was all fair, and in whom there was no stain—the lily of womanhood amongst the thorns of Humanity? Will we pay reverence to the learned and the wise, and deny it to Her who was the Mother of Wisdom? Will all the world go out in its holiday dress to behold the spectacle of an earthly queen—will the canons roar, and the joy-bells ring when she comes, and will the air be filled with shouts of jubilee when her diadem glitters in the sunshine, and yet so few

come out to meet the Queen of Heaven, so few be found to sound her praises, or swell the canticle of rejoicing for her glories? Nay, will we bend with devotion over the tomb of buried majesty and queenly splendour, though the form beneath has crumbled into dust, and no tongue can tell where the spirit dwells? And shall we not approach with feelings of veneration the shrine of her whose body was that from which the body of Jesus was formed—the flesh which the Word of God assumed, and which, in a state of incorruption, was taken up into His kingdom, and whose spirit dwells in those regions of bliss, where she is the Queen of Angels and of Saints—nay, of Heaven itself? Oh! strange perversion of reason—strange fatuity of irreligion that cries, “honour to whom honour is due,” and will refuse it to the fairest, purest, queenliest being that ever issued from the hand of God—to God’s own Mother—to her who, despite her humility, was forced by the irresistible influence of inspiration to proclaim her own exalted privilege of being venerated by the world. “Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid, therefore shall all generations call me blessed.” The very hatred and contempt which she receives at the hands of those who despise our holy religion, and all that belongs to it, should stimulate us to intensify our feelings of love and veneration towards Her, that we may, if possible, supply by the excess of our devotion for the defective homage of our fellow-men, if only that, by the ardour of our attachment, we may induce her to intercede more earnestly for them to God, that they may be converted from a course so disrespectful to her, so hateful to God, and so injurious to the interests of their own immortal souls. For, alas! they shall pass away, and find, too late, the error of their thoughts, and the evil of their deeds; but Mary will still be Queen of Heaven, and verify her own prediction, that “all generations shall call me blessed.”

With death Man’s power and greatness become extinct, the power and greatness before which the world bows down in most respectful homage; but the glory of the Saints, and above all, the glory of her who was “full of grace,” shall never come to an end; shall never be diminished by a single ray of its effulgence. She shall reign the Queen of Heaven for all eternity, and the purest and

holiest of the Saints. They who fasted, and watched, and wept in caves and deserts ; they who lived and died for God alone—nay, they who never stained the white robe of Baptismal purity shall gaze for ever with love and veneration on her who was Immaculate from the very dawn of her Conception, and whose soul, from that instant until her departure from this world, was like a placid lake receiving into its bosom from all sides the rivers and the streamlets flowing from the ocean of God's grace, until at the close of her life it ebbed back with all its sparkling tributaries into the boundless depths from which those tributaries were derived. All Honour, then, after God, to God's holy Mother, to the Immaculate Virgin Mary—to her whom all generations shall call blessed, blessed amongst women, blessed before she was born, blessed after her assumption into heaven beyond all the Saints of God, beyond all the angels that worship before the Eternal Throne, beside which she reigns and shines radiant with everlasting beauty.

But, my Brethren, the most pleasing thought for us to-night is, that it is in our power to procure in our behalf the intercession of that glorious Virgin before the Throne of God. And we are surely justified in believing that He will never refuse her prayer, whatever it may be ; for, how could God be deaf to the entreaties of her who gave Him more glory than all the children of men ; in contemplating whom He took an infinite delight ? When God created the world, we are told that He saw it was good : what must have been his complacency in beholding her, who was so faithful to the graces of His Holy Spirit—who, in her relation to His Divine Son, from the manger to the Cross, followed and watched, suffered and wept with Him, the Man of Sorrows, as she was Sorrow's Queen, who was in body and soul the most beauteous being that ever came from His creative hand ; a Being so pure, that were it possible for men to atone, she alone would have atoned to Him for the inexpressible crime of Eve ? Would that we were Immaculate as she was : but, alas ! that is past, we can only emulate her fidelity to grace, as it is impossible to aim at the purity of her soul. Oh ! if we would obtain her intercession, if we would have her plead for us with her whole heart to God, let us beg of her on this night, when earth

and heaven triumph in the celebration of her Immaculate Conception, to pray to God for us that we may study and work for a purity of heart which may make each one of us worthy hereafter to cry out with her—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, because he that is mighty hath done great things for me, and holy is his name."

SERMON

ON THE VALUE OF TIME.

“A little while and you will not see me.”—JOHN, xvi. 16, &c.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—The words read in the Gospel of this day form part of a discourse delivered by Our Blessed Saviour to His apostles immediately after the Last Supper, and intended by Him to prepare them for the difficulties they were to encounter in establishing His Church upon earth. Many portions of that discourse apply to the Apostles alone, spoken for their guidance only; this, with many other parts, is pointed for our instruction as well as theirs. For that reason it is proposed on this day for the consideration of the faithful, and is suggested for the exposition of the preachers. The Saviour had forewarned His apostles of the great labours they should undertake, and the great sufferings they should endure in the fulfilment of the task set before them. It was only meet that He should hold forth to them the prospect of repose after their toils, and of joy after their sorrows. While He was with them, weak as they were in faith, and dull to the influence of grace, they were sustained and gladdened by Him—sustained by the invigorating power of His words; gladdened by the ineffable charms of His converse. Thus on one occasion when, startled by the simple force with which He foretold the doctrine of the Eucharist, the fact that He was to give His flesh and blood to be consumed, some of His disciples went away from Him; and when turning to the twelve, He asked, will you also go away? we observe Peter replying for them all, with that faith and love which at all times so distinguished him, and exclaiming, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Yes, while He was with them, they were content—they

reposed in His love, they were enraptured by the delights of His sweet companionship. But they knew that He should die; for He had told them. He now announces it again, "A little while, and you shall not see me." But the pain caused by this announcement, He immediately removed. "Again, a little while, and you shall see me."

Now, my Brethren, I wish you to understand the full meaning of these few words, and in explaining them I am not so presumptuous as to interpret them according to my own judgment; but I give you the exposition of them approved by great Fathers and Doctors in the Church of Christ. When Our Lord says, "a little while and you shall not see me," He alludes to His ascension into heaven, by which He was to be removed from their sight; and when He adds, "again a little while and you shall see me," He points to His coming in judgment on the last day. Meanwhile He foretold to them and us that His followers should lament and weep, while the "world," that is, they who would know Him or love Him not, "would rejoice." The world, the sinful, reckless world, would have its reward here in the pleasure of its own seeking, but for the faithful children of His Church, "their sorrow," at that second coming "shall be turned into joy." "You indeed," during this sad pilgrimage of life, "have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you." You will observe, in this interpretation of our Blessed Saviour's words, a very striking, and I might add a most startling truth, and that is, that the whole time elapsing from His ascension into heaven until He comes to judge mankind is described as "a little while;" in fact, that the same phrase precisely is used to designate both periods of time, the last weeks passed between His Last Supper and His Ascension, and the centuries which will roll from His ascension unto His reappearance in the valley of Jehosaphat. For that little while the world will rejoice, for that little time the faithful children of Christ shall suffer. If, then, the thousands of years through which the world will last are called only "a little while," alas! how truly little is the whole of man's brief existence, the seventy or eighty years of troublous life in this world. Yet so it is. Few things are more clearly or frequently set forth in the Sacred Scriptures than the shortness of time, and of the life of man; "a thousand years

in thy sight," says the psalmist, "are as yesterday which is past, and as a watch in the night. Things that are counted as nothing shall their years be. In the morning man shall grow up like grass; in the morning he shall flourish and pass away; in the evening he shall fall, grow dry and wither."

The Sacred Word now compares man's life to a breath, to a shadow, to a flower, to every type of evanescence, to every emblem of decay. "My days," exclaimed Job, "have been swifter than a post: they have fled away, and have not seen good, they have passed by, as ships carrying fruit, as an eagle flying to the prey." What, then? is it better to join with the world in using time for pleasures that pass like a shadow, or to toil and labour, and if necessary to lament and weep, for that joy which will be imparted to us by the God of Love on His second coming, "when our hearts shall rejoice, and our joy no man shall take from us"? In a word, shall we spend our days as a sower might scatter chaff which is borne away by the wind, or shall we employ them in laying the seeds of good works to fructify unto everlasting life? That is the great question on which our whole happiness for time and eternity depends; and, it is well that each one of us should this day answer it for himself.

In the first place, my Brethren, consider that time is the price of eternity; if you spend your time well, you purchase an eternity of happiness; if you spend it ill, you purchase an eternity of woe. God created us for no other purpose than that we might love and serve Him all the days of our life. It was solely for this purpose that God created time; time is a gratuitous gift of His; He was not obliged to create any one of us. Had He so wished, we need never have been born. But He did create us that we might give glory to Him for ever. And, alas! what was the first use of time made by man? The very first man that God ever created availed himself of time for the purpose of offending his Creator. At the moment that offence was committed, man lost the privilege of living; he sacrificed all right, such as it was, to enjoy one other second of time; and, by the inscrutable judgment of God, all mankind, even to the end of the world, were doomed, in penalty of his crime, to the same terrible privation. It was only by the blood of Jesus Christ that this sentence

against man was blotted out ; it was by His death that time was bought back for man. Our days and moments, therefore, are the first blessings that flow to us from the cross. The time which we foolishly squander away is the price of His blood, the fruit of His death, the reward of His sacrifice. More than that, by every sin we commit, we incur a fresh sentence of death, we sacrifice the privilege of life, of time ; as often as God ceases to smite us with the death-stroke, we receive from Him a new life, that, by making proper use of so great a blessing, we may make reparation for our past criminal abuse of time. Every moment, then, we receive from God, after having sinned, is a new blessing from God, a continued miracle of His mercy and His love. Clearly, then, by squandering away those precious moments, to which we have no title, by devoting them to indolence and sin, we offer a grievous, wanton, deliberate insult to the great, the good, the just, the all-merciful God.

My Brethren, with some Christians, the thought of the offence offered to God by sin is a motive sufficient to excite them to amendment ; while others are not moved except by the consideration of its evil consequences to themselves. Let us, therefore, see what are the consequences entailed upon man by the misemployment of time. Time, I have said, was given to us by God for no other purpose than that, by using it properly, we might procure for ourselves an eternity of happiness hereafter. Any man, therefore, who neglects to avail himself of this inestimable blessing, practically says, I do not care for eternal happiness—I do not care to give glory to God ; I am satisfied to be lost for ever. What folly, what impiety, can be more reprehensible than this ? What would you say to a man of the world, who could, by a little industry, amass for himself a large fortune, but who preferred poverty and indolence to wealth and rational comfort ? Would you not denounce him as a fool ? And alas ! what in comparison is the folly of him who, possessing an immortal soul, goes through life like the beast of the field, seeking only to gratify his animal propensities and passions, heedless of the future—the eternal future ; born to an immortal crown, yet content to be a slave ; heir to eternal glory, yet resigned to eternal damnation ? And this is the folly you are all guilty of when you neglect to employ your time in the practice of piety

and virtue. Every moment of time is more precious than treasures of gold. Many a man purchased an eternity of happiness by the proper use of one second of time ; by yielding, in one second, to the grace of God ; by a sudden conversion of his heart ; by suffering a martyr's death ; by the performance of one heroic act of love for his Maker : and those are the priceless moments the sinner squanders ! Those moments will never return—once fled they are passed for ever ; and, what is more, for every moment man must render a strict account to his Eternal Judge on the last day.

These observations I make, my Brethren, to show you the value of time. By making proper use of it, we procure an eternity of bliss hereafter. See what happiness is conferred on man by the proper use of it, even here below ! By employing our time according to the will of God, we fulfil the end of our creation, we give glory to God, we enrich our souls with virtues, we blot out the guilt of sin, and thus we are happy. God never intended that man should be unhappy. Being Himself a God of eternal and infinite goodness and love, it would be inconsistent with His nature to wish unhappiness to any of His creatures ; and it will be found, if any one takes the trouble to search, that those only are miserable who live in the violation of His commandments, that is, who misemploy their time. The generality of men are unhappy, because they do not understand the value of time, because they neglect to learn it. They seem to think that man was born to wretchedness and woe, and that the great object of his life should be to dissipate his thought from sadness, by spending his time in the pursuit of pleasure. They follow out their reasoning ; they purchase it at the sacrifice of health, of wealth, of conscience, of reputation, of eternity. They traverse the whole world in pursuit of it ; but, alas ! they find it not ; for, to borrow the idea even of a heathen philosopher, the black phantom of care sits behind their saddle through every whirl of the chase. The end comes ; they find they have been pursuing an *ignis fatuus*, while in the heaven above them the light of eternal peace and joy gleams with a mild and genial radiance, in which repose the elect of God, themselves descending to the regions of everlasting wretchedness and gloom.

On the other hand, what are the sensations of those

who employ their time as God wills? Where shall we find them? Either in the turmoil of the world, or the seclusion of the cloister. In the world, the model man, who wins the admiration even of the vicious and depraved, is he, it matters not what may be his position in life, who keeps the commandments of God, who labours industriously at his occupation or profession, not to amass wealth, but to secure a competence for himself and his family; who does all he does for God's greater honour and glory. Think you not that man is happy? Aye, and you can never comprehend the peace and tranquillity of that man's mind until you go and do likewise.

Goto the cloister, where time is turned to its best account, where every moment transmutes a thought, word, or deed, into a golden merit, where indolence is unknown, and labour is the rule of life. Do we find happiness there? Oh! yes, as it is nowhere else to be found; pure, serene, and bright as a crystal river in the sunshine of Heaven. Destitute of all good and enjoyment of this world, these humble souls may be supposed to be wretched; but no, their poverty, their meekness, and humility are the true source of their happiness. "Learn of me," says Our Lord, "to be meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls." Thus we find that whether in the world or the cloister, true happiness is only found in the practice of virtue and good works; in other words, the proper use of the great gift of time.

And yet this is the blessing which worldlings feel at so great a loss how to employ. So blind are they to the value of time, that they do not know what to do with it. They have invented various phrases to indicate what a burden it is. They ask how shall we kill time? What shall we do with ourselves to-day? Time hangs heavy, they say, on their hands; they are bored for something to do; they suffer from ennui, they can do nothing; they wish it were to-morrow, next month, next summer or winter, when they might enjoy their favourite pastimes. Oh! my Brethren, Is this the language of Christians? Nothing to do! How many things has a Christian to do! Has he not to bless and praise God? to atone for his sins? to edify his neighbour? to succour the poor? to visit the sick and comfort the afflicted? and a thousand other proper and peculiar duties? The criminal who is sentenced to death knows

the value of time ! he is not at a loss how to employ it—for him the moments speed away with wings of lightning. He sits not down idly and listlessly, at a loss for occupation. Every second he turns to account—he prays and weeps, bewailing the manifold sinfulness of an ill-spent life, with tears of true repentance. So well does he understand the value of time, that he would fain have more and more of it to pursue the good work of reconciliation with his offended God ; but as his time is short and fixed, he makes up for its shortness by the intensity of his fervour ; banishing all thoughts of the world, he lives only for repentance, for heaven, for God. This is the very light, my Brethren, in which we ought to regard time, for we are all like that criminal, under sentence of death ; the only difference being that while he is forewarned, we are uncertain of the hour of our departure : hence, like him, however, we know that our time is very, very short. Like him we are condemned for our crimes ; we have thousands of sins to expiate, vices to cancel, and virtues to acquire. Were we assured that we should not die for a certain long time, we might postpone the hour of conversion, but alas, we know not when the fatal bolt may be launched from the hand of the Almighty ; and we have it on the word of Our Blessed Lord Himself, that it shall come at the hour when we least expect it. Are we not then guilty of the most unpardonable folly in frittering away our precious time, in crying out that it hangs heavily on our hands, that we do not know how to spend it, when we should, by proper use of it, be laying up for ourselves treasures of bliss for a never-ending eternity ? Oh ! let us not provoke by our indolence and sloth the Great Judge in whose hands is our eternal destiny, lest His justice triumph over His mercy, and He anticipate in his wrath the execution of the sentence which He only postpones in the infinite plenitude of His goodness and His love.

Nevertheless, my Brethren, let no one imagine that we are bound to spend every moment of our time in the exercises of prayer or devotion. Such a thing would be impossible to man, and God does not exact it. There are times when the body needs repose, and the mind relaxation ; and these, so far from being a waste of time, are frequently a duty which it would be even sinful to neglect. Recreation and innocent amusement are, in fact, necessary, because

they enable one to pursue with greater facility the serious works imposed by social or religious obligations. But the great mistake men commit is, that they make amusement the principal, and sometimes the sole end and aim of their existence ; they live to eat, to idle, to read frivolous books, to dress for admiration, to move in the circles of fashion, to visit and be visited, to win praise, honours, titles, to kill time, and laugh, as they say, the weary hours away. Each pursues his own favourite pleasure, that is, indulges his own favourite passions. Each falls down and adores the idol himself has made, while the true God who created him is ignored, dishonoured, insulted, and despised.

Oh ! then, my Brethren, think, ere it is too late, of the great interests involved for you in the employment of time. Do you wish to be happy here ? Spend your time well. Do you wish to love, and be loved by God ? Use the time He has given you as it ought to be used. It requires no great effort ; it only requires that whatever you do, whether you eat, drink, or sleep, you should do all for the honour and glory of God, and in the name of Jesus Christ. Have you mis-spent the past ? It is not too late to begin. Why stand you all the day idle ? Know you not that he who comes at the eleventh hour receives the same reward as he who worked all day ? Work then, ere the night comes when no man can work. Work for God ; and He who never belied His promise will be your eternal reward. Blessed is the servant whom when his Master comes, he shall find watching. Amen, I say to you, He will place him over all His possessions.

SERMON

IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.*

“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love, one for another.”—JOHN, xiii. 35.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—I stand here to-day to plead the noblest cause that ever engaged the advocacy of a preacher, or won the interest of an audience—a cause sanctified by the frequent vindication of our Blessed Saviour Himself, and transmitted by Him to us for veneration in the tenderest and most solemn language of bequeathment—a cause, in the promotion of which the vigorous efforts of Christianity have been for the last eighteen hundred years unceasingly employed all over the world ; for which her Saints have taught, and toiled, and died ; which has ever been supported by the eloquence of her pulpits, by the writings of her Fathers, and by the labours of her children ; and which, therefore, comes before you this day with the same appealing voice as ever, but with titles to our consideration the most magnificent, time-honoured, and sacred, that ever fortified an appeal to the sympathies of Christian hearts ; and that is the cause of suffering man. And it needs but little to abet its appeal, beside those ancient titles to regard. Hard indeed would be my task, were I to plead this cause before a Heathen audience, even in the brightest days of its civilization, for the civilization of heathenism treated tenderness with contempt, and the sternness of the Heathens was proverbial. But I am addressing the disciples of Him who first made fraternal love the touchstone of religion, and the distinguishing characteristic of its votaries : “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love, one

* Preached in the Cathedral, Cork, November 11, 1866.

for another." And no ordinary, no half-handed, or half-hearted votaries of charity are those whom I address, but Christian men and women, who have come here voluntarily to prove their devotion to this sacred cause—who need not, for the awakening of their benevolence, either the stimulating influence of oratory, or the more unworthy excitement of human applause; but who give with the impulsive generosity of Christians' love; who, in giving, will not suffer their left hand to know what the right hand does, and seek, as the only reward of their charity, the furtherance of God's glory on earth, and a participation of that glory hereafter.

Easy task, so far, is mine. But there may be those who are not altogether disinterested, and devoted to the cause of the poor, and their God; whose hearts have cooled by contact with a frigid world, and are hard to be warmed by the rays of Christian love, in whom their innate tenderness of soul is stifled by the engrossing cares of flesh; to those I come *armed*, to fight the battle of the poor and the suffering; I come with a weapon not my own, but of the Most High—that weapon is "the Word of God," as described by St. Paul, "living and effectual, more piercing than a two-edged sword, and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit" (Heb. iv.) And such is the sword I need—a sword that will cut off the animal excrescences, and set the soul pure and free, such as it is in its godlike character, willing to hear the voice, and do the work of God; a sword that will penetrate into the spiritual depths, where lies the golden ore of Charity, that it may be brought to light, and coined by the skilful workmen of Christ, for the enriching of Christ's suffering poor.

Glorious privilege of the Preacher, wielding the weapon of the Lord, whose battle he fights; wielding by his own slight energies the powers of Omnipotence itself! But I am consoled by reflecting that I plead the cause of no ordinary charity, but one pre-eminently dignified in its patron, its dispensers, and its object; having for its patron one of the greatest moral heroes that ever appeared on the arena of life—the wonderful St. Vincent de Paul; having for its dispensers men exposed by wealth, and intellect, and passion, to all the temptations by which the just are tried, and triumphing over all, that they may do the work of God; having for its object the assisting and

consoling of the poor and the wretched, drying the mourner's tears, and soothing the pangs of the sick and the dying—doing all that a religion of love prescribes for securing the peace and comfort, and aiding in the salvation of souls, for which Jesus died.

It is to this threefold view of the question, as embracing it in its entirety, that I would invite your attention; that you may admire and imitate, even at a distance, the marvellous charity of the Saint; that you may also study and follow the virtues of those who have had the faith and courage to band themselves together for the dispensation of the charities of which he is the patron; and that you may co-operate with them in the holy work by which you will show yourselves to be true disciples of Jesus Christ, for “By this shall all men know that you are his disciples, if you have love, one for another.”

Towards the close of the sixteenth century, the religious and social condition of the French people was the most deplorable that could well be imagined. The monarch was the personification of triumphant tyranny; the aristocracy fawned on the throne, and crushed the people with an iron heel; the clergy, for the most part scions of noble houses, regarded the Church only as an arena for the obtainment of splendid sinecures, where religion was but a shadow, and wealth the substance. The mass of the people, the victims of spiritual neglect, of civil wars, famine, and pestilence, lay immersed in ignorance and vice, toiling for the mere privilege of existence, spending their sweat and their strength in enriching the monsters that oppressed them, and then succumbing irresistibly to death—the last refuge of the weary and the worn. The whole country swarmed with beggars: there was, with few exceptions, no refuge for the sick—no asylum for the insane—no protection for the orphan or foundling—no hope for the Magdalen—in a word, no corrective for the woes of poverty or crime.

These features of society were observable not only in France, but, more or less, all over Europe; for it was a time of universal war and strife; nations were in a state of transition; peoples were passing from feudal subjection to self-appreciation and independence; Heresy had raised its hydra head, and the clash of opinions found an exponent in the clash of arms; even Slavery, the ancient scourge of

the human race, though banished from Europe, yet wreaked its baneful fury on European victims, on the burning coasts of Tunis and Algiers. The whole state of the Continent was chaotic, half-savage, and ungodly, and the footsteps of advancing civilization proceeded over the trampled ruins of its victims. And yet, the Church was still in the midst of men. She stood, as of old, on the rock, bold and unflinching, with the luminous lamp still burning in her hand, while the millions below could not see the light through the intervening shadows of death. She still preached the golden rule of charity, though her words found a responsive echo only in the breasts of a chosen few. The mine of benevolence lay beneath her feet, only in part explored, while the workmen, who should dig and delve, slumbered beside it in inglorious repose. Like her Master, she selected for the work of reform some few of the very humblest of her children, that man may not glory, but that the finger of God might be manifest in all.

Chief amongst the Apostles of the Church at this time was one whose special mission was to be France, his native land. He is the son of a shepherd; and he is a captive in Barbary, the fettered slave of Turks. For three years, the kidnapped Frenchman toils and sweats beneath the burning sun of Africa, with no hope of reward—no hope of release, except it be by the will and operation of his God; and this is the man who is destined by his Creator to change the whole aspect of his native country, to reform the manners of the clergy, to open an asylum to every human infirmity, spiritual and corporal; without much knowledge, to instruct the ignorant; without riches to crush out poverty, to send his missionaries all over the known world, men who, like himself, would glory in laying down their lives that the lives and souls of their fellow-men might be preserved: this slave is the man who is to be the loved and cherished of kings, the sharer of their councils, the worshipped of peoples, the venerated of a long posterity. Others come to destroy, but he comes to build up. Others come with sword and shield and spear, but he comes in the name of the Lord of Hosts. That shepherd's son, that captive slave, that future apostle, reformer, and Saint, is no other than Saint Vincent de Paul.

Though a slave, he is a priest, typifying in his physical bondage the moral enslavement of his order. He wins

back to the Faith the last of his masters, a renegade Christian with whom he flies to France. Touched with compassion for the victims of slavery whom he had left behind, he never ceases until he goes to Rome, to the feet of the very Pontiff, and there pleads their cause. In the city of the apostles, the modest virtues of the future Saint shone with such lustre as forcibly to attract the ambassadors of Henry the Fourth, the illustrious monarch of France. The fame of Vincent reaches the royal ears, and the monarch will not rest until the brow of the humble priest is adorned by the mitre. But the dagger of the assassin frustrates the purpose of the king, and the priest relapses into his coveted obscurity.

With the restless activity of benevolence Vincent works by night and day, amongst the sick of the metropolis, unknown to all save the All-seeing God, and the wretched victims of disease to whom he ministers. But virtue will shine out in the lowest depths of obscurity, as pearls gleam in the caverns of Oceda. The Cardinal Berulle, an ecclesiastic of great sanctity and influence at court, by chance discovers this indefatigable but shrinking priest, in some hospital of the city, and is soon made acquainted with his virtues. Vincent is recommended by the Cardinal to the Queen for promotion, and is soon raised to the dignity of Almoner to her majesty Marguerite de Valois, by whom he is also nominated to the abbacy of Chaume, one of the richest in the kingdom. But how could the zeal of the man of God find a working-place amidst the scandalous ease of ecclesiastical opulence? No, he casually hears that there is a poor parish called Clichy, where three pastors, one after another, had sought to live, but fled, from the pangs of poverty, and left the people to perish of spiritual destitution. This is the field for the labours of Vincent, let who will be the almoner of Marguerite, and the abbot of Chaume. He flies to Clichy, and buries himself in its seclusion. But the world's greatness pursues him, alluring as if it mean to destroy; he is permitted to pursue his labour of love only for six months, when, amidst the tears and lamentations of his parishioners, he is drawn away once more to Paris, to become tutor to the children of the Marquis de Gondi, general of the galleys. But here again Vincent finds himself misplaced. He cannot live a life of repose; his soul must be

abroad ; it must be ever on the wing. He flies once more, but whither ? In the family of the General of the Galleys, he could not help hearing of the galley-slaves. He has an ancient remembrance, and an ancient pity for the sufferings of slaves. He flies to the galleys of Marseilles, and moves amongst the victims of crime and torture, an angel of light bearing brightness, and warmth, and love wherever he goes ; he has nothing save his piety and zeal, but they are enough. The galleys are more like the lairs of brutes than the prisons of men ; the slaves are coarse, brutish, blasphemous, irritable beings, raving madmen of sin. Vincent at first is scoffed and despised ; but the disciple is not above his Master ; he works, exhorts, helps and has patience. What is the result ? What it ever is. Vice always crouches beneath the assuaging hand of virtue. The brute is vanquished by the human soul. Vincent is worthy of his name ; he is a conqueror. The galleys, once echoing with the horrible exclamations of blasphemy, now resound with the praises of God, and tears bedew the cheeks of men whose fountains of remorse appeared to have been for ever dried.

And will Vincent even now be permitted to pursue his course of humble, efficient labour ? No ; but the obstacle now is, strange to say, his own charity, his burning love for suffering man. A young man, a galley slave, resists all Vincent's efforts to reclaim him. He is deaf to entreaty and exhortation. And why ? Because he has a wife and child at home, from whom he has been exiled, and who must starve because he is doomed to the galleys. What can Vincent do ? Charity, come up from thy lowest depths, to astound the world, and prove that man, despite his infirmity, is little less than the angels ! What can Vincent do ? He takes the place of the slave, and sends the husband home to his wife and child !! He takes in exchange for freedom the captivity, the fetters, the disgrace, the labours of a galley slave, and is proud, that he can do so much for the sake of Christ. Oh ! wondrous charity ! charity almost incredible ; but, of its kind, Vincent was not in the Church of God a singular exhibitor. What may not such a man do in the cause of Him who has said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love, one for another."

The fame of his wondrous self-sacrifice gets abroad,

and the Saint must fly from the sound of his own praise. He buries himself once more in a poor parish, where he hopes at length to toil obscurely in the vineyard of the Lord; but the fame of his heroic deeds reaches the ears of King Louis XIII., who confers on him the dignity of Almoner General of the Galleys, an office I believe enjoyed to this day by the Superior-General of his order. At this time Providence places at his disposal an immense and rich monastery, that of St. Lazarus, which was destined to become, under his hands, perhaps one of the most celebrated nurseries of the priesthood in the world. Here he gradually establishes his congregation of the Mission—here he conducts retreats for thousands of his fellow-countrymen—here he acquires and exercises the privilege of examining candidates for the priesthood for all France; working thus the most astounding, and the most radical reform that ever took place in a body of men; discarding from the Church the indolent children of luxury, and establishing the order upon a new basis; giving to France a clergy unsurpassed by any in the world, up to the present day, for purity, zeal, and holiness.

In the midst of this humble, plodding work, he is still pursued by the great ones of the world, who will persist in heaping unwelcome honours on his head. His monarch is on his dying-bed, and no confessor but Vincent de Paul can satisfy the spiritual longings of his expiring Majesty. Beside that pompous couch, the humble Vincent stands, the whilome shepherd of Bordeaux, the whilome slave of Tunis. There he takes by the hand the youthful heir to the throne, the future Louis XIV., the great monarch, and administers to him sage counsel, made more solemn and impressive by the presence of the prince's expiring father. There he receives from that father the order to exercise, during the reign of the son, the extraordinary privilege, the royal function, of appointing the bishops to every see in the kingdom. This privilege he exercises after the death of the monarch, during the Regency of Ann of Austria, to her perfect satisfaction, notwithstanding the officious interposition, at times, of Mazarin. Wonderful dignity of the man of God; wonderful triumph of charity! wonderful homage paid by worldly grandeur to saintly humbleness! This man, who is nothing more than a poor unlearned priest, has almost the whole

government of the kingdom in his hands ; he is the adviser of the Queen, the controller of the minister ; the guardian of the youthful monarch, the security for the whole Church of France. Taking a retrospect of his past career, "we have but to substitute a name, and we behold Joseph guarding the flocks of his father Jacob ; sold to the Ishmaelites ; led into slavery ; delivered from captivity by the interposition of heaven, and finally, settled next to the throne of Pharaoh, to dispense the favours of the King of Egypt."

But, my Brethren, although Vincent has now attained a very mature age, and has worked hard, and earned high honours, and might be for ever famous if he died, yet his work has, truth to speak, scarcely yet begun. He has been up to this time only laying the foundations of his palace of philanthropy, in which there were to be so many gorgeous chambers. Were I preaching the panegyric of the Saint, I might conduct you through all the splendours of that glorious edifice in detail ; but I am not, I only sketch here and there a feature of his life, that you may admire the wondrous virtues of the Saint whose name is linked with the charities you are assembled to support ; and that I may awaken in your breasts the honest pride to sustain an institution coupled with a name so illustrious in the Church of God ! Behold a few of the marvels of his maturer charity and zeal ! During the wars of the Fronde, which multiplied the victims of poverty and disease all over France, Vincent set an example by which hospitals were speedily raised throughout the land. He established the Order of the Sisters of Charity, the noblest, the sublimest, the most good-working institution ever established in the world. You are familiar with the Sisters of Charity, with the generosity of their sacrifice, their devotion to suffering humanity, their sweetness and mildness, before which sin flies abashed, and sorrow is turned into joy. There is a strange sublimity in the words used by Vincent when explaining to them the nature of their rule : "You shall," says he to them, "have no other monasteries but the houses of the poor, no cloisters but the streets of towns and the wards of hospitals, no enclosure but obedience, no other veil than a holy modesty." Vincent remembers the days of his captivity ; the true Israelite remembers the bondage of Babylon, and, like another

Zerobabel, seeks to lighten the woes of those who suffered as he suffered. Money is a trifling difficulty in his way, for he needs but to open his lips and the charity of all France is awakened, and its treasures poured into his hands. He establishes permanent resources for the redemption of captives ; he endows an extensive hospital for them within the walls of Algiers ; he founds in Paris an asylum for the special benefit of galley slaves delivered from imprisonment ; he opens at Marseilles an hospital with three hundred beds for such as require them. Unwearying Vincent ! “ We must love God,” he says, “ in the sweat of our brow.” He might say with the prophet, “ The spirit of the Lord is upon me to comfort all that mourn.” Obstacles, so far from retarding his progress, only stimulate him to more vigorous exertion. The most gigantic and apparently impracticable undertakings are to him a labour of love, and he ceases not until they are accomplished. Forty thousand mendicants infest the capital of France ; Vincent proceeds to provide for the wants of all. The task appears stupendous, but he does it. Working slowly, but steadily, he at length has erected an asylum where six thousand forlorn beings find not a refuge, but a home. The rest are professional beggars, who had had recourse to the occupation only as a cloak for the acquisition of money which they did not need, and which they are now glad to work for. At another time the provinces of France are deluged with war, and the necessities of life are swept away. Their delegates fly to Vincent for relief ; and such are his inexhaustible resources, that he sends them food sufficient for their wants, and implements of husbandry to enable them independently to procure for themselves the means of their future subsistence. His charity is indeed that of the just man, which is compared in the Sacred Scriptures to “ a river of benediction diffusing abundance all around.”

The tongue would grow weary of recounting the wondrous deeds by which Vincent de Paul shed the blessings of charity on his native land. Perhaps the most difficult, and yet the most successful, of all his undertakings, as it was undoubtedly one of the most charitable, was the foundation of hospitals for foundlings. These unhappy children, the offspring of vice, and the victims of poverty, were used, for the most part, by professional beggars, who distorted their limbs, and disfigured their persons, the better

to excite the compassion of the charitable. One day Vincent, passing through the outskirts of Paris, beholds a beggar engaged in this horrible process of mutilation on a child. His soul shudders at the sight, and his anger, in spite of him, breaks forth. He remembers his Saviour's love for little children, "Monster!" said he, "I mistook you for a man." He wrests the child from the grasp of its deformer, and takes it in his arms through the city. Convoing an assembly of the faithful, he holds the tender infant up before them, and declaims, in burning accents of zealous indignation, on the horrible cruelties to which such little ones were suffered to be exposed. He announces that measures must be taken, without delay, to rescue from such dangers the dear little children for which Jesus died. The public repine at the ceaseless importunity of Vincent; but this project appears so utterly impracticable that they denounce it as altogether beyond the reach of their charity. But he does not think so. He gathers together all the foundlings he can discover, they are five hundred in number; he convenes an extraordinary assembly; the Sisters of Charity are present; he consigns the weeping little ones to their charge; he mingles his sighs with their infant wailings; his tongue, in pleading their cause, is touched with heaven's own fire. "Behold, ladies," he cries, in a burst of passionate, irresistible eloquence, "behold, you have adopted these children, you are become their mothers, according to grace, since their natural mothers have abandoned them. Say will you also desert them for ever? Cease at this moment to be their mothers, and become their judges; their life and their death are in your hands. I shall now take your suffrages; it is time you pronounce their doom. Look upon them here before you; they will live if you continue to them your charitable protection, but to-morrow will behold them perish, if you cast them off." Never was appeal more triumphant; the church is filled with weeping; the children are embraced and fondled; an asylum is instantly established, and 40,000 livres are devoted to it as an annual income. Similar institutions spread, not only in France, but all over Europe.

At this day there are hospitals in France, giving refuge to no fewer than 100,000 foundling children; thanks, under providence of God, to the zeal of St. Vincent de Paul, and the charity awakened by him, in the bosoms of subsequent

generations of his spiritual children. To crown all, as if France were too small for his labours, he sends missionaries to the most distant regions of the earth ; he sends priests and alms to Poland, to the Hebrides of Scotland, to Barbary and Madagascar ; he sends continual succours to the Maronite Christians, oppressed by the Turks ; Ireland was not forgotten, for we find his priests officiating in Cashel and Limerick, during the wars of Charles I., while, at the same time, in England, they soften the asperities of Cromwell's persecuting protectorate. Truly did he say, " We must love God in the sweat of our brow ;" and nobly he proved how well he believed it.

Such is the Saint whose charities you are this day called on to sustain and to perpetuate. He was raised up by God not for his own generation, but for all posterity. He appeals to you to-day to aid the poor and the suffering, as earnestly as he could do, were he still upon the earth amongst the living. He appeals to you from the heights of heaven, where he reigns with God ; and think you not that, if you heed his voice, he will pray for you with irresistible efficacy to that God whom he loved during life, with all the powers of his mighty soul ?

But let us turn for a moment from the consideration of the virtues of St. Vincent de Paul, to those who to-day are animated by his spirit, and who, under the auspices of his glorious name, devote themselves to the relief and consideration of the suffering poor. And who are they ? They are men not only in this country, but in every country, of the highest rank in the community ; men of position, of wealth, of intellectual cultivation ; men with domestic duties to discharge, but who yet find time for the fulfilment of their duties to their neighbour ; men who are models of Christian virtue and Christian zeal ; whose hearts are on the law of God, who remember the words of St. Paul, that " He who loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law." They are shining lights, which prove to the world that charity is ever on fire amongst the children of the Church. But what is their peculiar praise ? It is, that they resist the strong and numerous temptations to which their charity is exposed. They are men of wealth, and yet they are not allured from the path of duty, by the ease which wealth affords. They are men of position, yet utterly destitute of pride ; they scorn not, but rather glory, to enter cabins of

the poor, and see with their own eyes the wretchedness and squalor that poverty spreads around ; they delight to minister with their own hands, to the representatives of Christ, the bread that may sustain, and the sympathy that may console. They are men of intellectual culture, which, by widening the sphere of knowledge, invites to new pleasures, and intensifies the powers of seduction ; and yet even these guileful allurements they resist and surmount, showing forth the power of grace, and the triumph of religion. Living in elegance and comfort themselves, their tastes are delicate, their senses are refined, their abhorrence of moral and physical foulness is naturally intense ; and yet they man themselves against nature, to do the work of God ; they despise all for Christ ; they are more exquisitely happy if they bring consolation to one sick or poor fellow-creature than they could be when surrounded by all the appliances with which wealth caters to sensual caprice. Great shall be the reward of these men, for, alas ! we find that amongst their order, socially considered, they stand as a chosen few. The world seems to think that religion is not for the rich, but for the poor ; not for the high, but for the humble ; not for the learned, but for the ignorant. Error, strange, indeed, if we did not know that it is only pretended ! And so rare are the good, that when a man of rank shows himself only Christian, when he complies with the bare prescriptions of religious duty, the world regards it almost as a condescension. But the followers, the posthumous friends, so to speak, of Vincent de Paul, prove that the purest and profoundest piety is compatible with worldly wealth, with nobility, with genius ; and that as humble a heart may beat beneath the broadcloth of a peer as beneath the frieze of a peasant ; that Jesus may find as worthy a disciple in the lordly mansion, as beneath the modest thatch of the poor man's cottage. By supporting this charity, therefore, you will still hold up before the eyes of men a spectacle only to be found in the bosom of a Church whose doctrine is self-annihilation for the sake of Christ ; a body of men illustrating the possibility of resisting all the temptations to which humanity is exposed ; that by showing love one for another, they may prove themselves worthy disciples of Him who, being infinitely rich, emptied Himself, for the sake of man ; who, having loved His own, loved them even unto the end.

The object sought to be attained by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is, to afford relief to the sick and poor; and in the exercise of this charity, as they show great discrimination, so their assistance is attended with the most beneficial results. For it is not easy at all times to find where true poverty exists. Some grow poor by their own fault, either by idleness or dissipation. To the entreaties of such self-pauperized applicants the Society turns a deaf ear—and justly, for these people have within themselves the resources of subsistence—if for indolence and dissipation, they substitute industry and sobriety. But there are persons who, notwithstanding their good intentions, are reduced to poverty by various accidents; by the sickness of the father, or son, or other working member of the family; by failure in trade; by many other means; persons whose self-respect is so strong, that they would not, for any consideration, enter a workhouse; persons who, with some slight assistance, will surmount their difficulties, and proceed once more in the path of labour and success. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul comes forward and gives assistance there; the sick father is supported until his health is restored; the poorly-clad daughter is provided with clothes, by which she may make a sufficiently decent appearance to ask for employment; everything is done by which honest poverty may be relieved, and honest industry helped forward. Thus thousands are saved from ruin and despair; life is given back to the expiring; joy to the sorrowful; hope to the desponding; gratitude to God is awakened in breasts that had almost doubted of His goodness; religion is triumphant, and its end attained, for the end of religion is the salvation of man, and the glory of the Lord.

You who dwell in stately mansions, where wealth, and ease, and luxury abound; where sorrow seldom dares intrude, and where the ghastly visage of disease loses half its ghastliness beneath the lenitives and sedatives which purchased skill applies—from whose walls of plenty, poverty with its grim train of ills shrinks away; you little know the pangs that rend the souls of your fellow-creatures in the haunts of misery, where the disciple of Vincent de Paul appears as an angel of light. We too, the ministers of God, know them, alas! too well. We are familiar with the narrow unfurnished room where lies the victim of want

and disease; the grim, sallow, fleshless cheek; the parched lip, the hollow voice, the shrunken limbs, the bed of damp straw upon the earthen floor, the mockery of a fire; but worse than all, the look of desolation and world-hatred and despair in the dim, sunken eye; that eye where it is so easy to read the dark tale of slow biting want, endured for months, perhaps years; the pride that would not beg, and the hard, cold repulse with which the world met it, when it did stoop to begging as a last resource; the appeal of woe, despised and scorned by the pampered children of wealth. Yes, that flickering eye bespoke a tale of a thousand sorrows *untold*, because there was no chance that the world would listen to the sad recital; sorrows, therefore, buried deep and deeper down in the sorrower's own breast, where they raged in volcanic convulsions, and burst forth at times, when they could no longer be repressed, in eruptions of scalding, solitary tears. Many a time did the demon of suicide whisper to the weary heart that there was a short, decisive remedy at hand; but suicide is not, with us, a national crime; for, thank heaven! even in the deepest dregs of poverty and affliction, the Irish sufferer finds a drop of religious consolation, sweet enough to neutralize all the bitterness of the cup. Indeed, to a minister of God, or a disciple of charity, it is like the echo of the Saviour's voice amidst the horrors of Gethsemane, to hear the wretched victim of sorrow exclaim: "Welcome be the will of God!" Aye, and in such an hour the follower of St. Vincent *does* come upon the woeful scene like the angel amidst the olives on that fatal night, the messenger of heaven to strengthen and to console, while, to urge the comparison still farther, the sated children of luxury revel in the whirl-dance of pleasure, forgetful of the tragedies enacting in their midst, and which they could have averted by the simplest compliance with the precepts of their religion. Will you fall asleep, like the Apostles that night who left our Saviour to combat solitary with his woes, or will you come forward and assist the angel in the work of consolation? for, by consoling the poor, you console Jesus, who has said, "As often as you have done it to one of these, my least brethren, you have done it unto me." To you who are so well acquainted with the teachings of your religion, and so well practised in its duties, I will not recite the language of Holy Writ on the subject of charity, either

to enlighten or to move you. Where charity is concerned you need neither enlightenment nor emotion ; but I hold up before you the life of St. Vincent de Paul as a mirror where you may see the charity of the Gospel reflected in all its warmest colours, and in all its quickness of vitality. I present to you that countenance where the Divine virtue wrought an aspect almost Divine, a face beaming with universal philanthropy. I bare before you that heart which pulsated unceasingly to the touch of benevolence, every chord of which combines to swell the monotone of Christian love ! I appeal to every feeling of your heart that sympathises with the beautiful and the good, and your response must be the response of co-operation with the charities of Vincent de Paul ; for, as I have told you, Vincent de Paul still lives in the spirit which he enkindled upon earth—you cannot escape from him, the energy of the dauntless old man can never die, the love which he enkindled upon earth can never grow cold. If he came amongst you this day to make the appeal in person, which has been confided to my unworthy advocacy, what would be the result ? I venture to say, that his burning love for man would find in the simplest words an eloquence sufficient to extract your last coin, as an exponent of your charity. You could not resist him. But the cause he would plead is the same which I plead for him. I am his advocate to-day, and if you admire his virtues, which I have only feebly portrayed, if you admire them sincerely, you will prove it by your practice—you will prove it by your co-operation with his disciples in the glorious work of charity ; if you do not show this practical acknowledgment of his marvellous virtues, then he has loved and I have laboured in vain. But I hope better things of you, I say I appeal to every feeling of your bosoms that sympathises with the beautiful and the good. Will you be surprised when I tell you that I rely upon your feeling of patriotism as one of the strongest bases of my hope in this great cause ? It is a fact recorded in the life of St. Vincent de Paul, that in the time of the civil wars in England, under the reign of Charles I., not content with extending his hospitality to the refugees from Great Britain, he begged of Cardinal Richelieu to succour the Catholics of Ireland, and offered the sum of one hundred thousand crowns—thirty thousand pounds sterling—towards the payment of

troops destined for their relief. This was at the time when the Irish rose against the tyranny of the English Parliament and Cromwell, the "Irish Rebellion," as it has been called by some, but which was in reality only an armed expression of their hereditary loyalty to king and country.

Have you common patriotic gratitude in your hearts, and will you to-day offer no recognition of the boundless sympathy manifested by Vincent de Paul, for the calamities and cruelties which your ancestors sustained under a tyranny the most barbarous ever witnessed in the world?

But kings, and kingdoms, and men, pass away, while the Word of God shall not pass away; and whatever be to-day the motive of your charity, take care that you exalt it, by blending with it the highest motive of all—the pure love of God; giving to the poor only that thus you may give glory to Him who made the love of your neighbour the fulfilment of the law, and the test of His faithful servants; for, "By this shall all men know," said He, "that you are all my disciples, if you have love one for another."

SERMON

ON HUMAN RESPECT.

“Now, when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to him : Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another ? and Jesus making answer said to them :—Go and relate to John what you have seen, and heard, the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them, and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me.” Words read in the Gospel of this day.—MATTHEW, ii. 2, and following verse.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—It is to the concluding words of this text that I would invite your particular attention on this evening—“Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me.” After all the miracles our Blessed Redeemer had wrought, after He had made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the dead to rise again, He yet anticipates that many shall be scandalized at His doctrine and at His life ; that the stranger to His creed shall blush to embrace the gospel of the cross ; that many of his own pretended followers shall be ashamed of the poverty of Bethlehem, and the ignominy of Calvary ; and, so strongly does he feel for the disgraceful weak-mindedness and sinfulness of such unhappy men, that He promises an eternal reward to such as shall escape the snares to which they have fallen victims : “Blessed,” He says, “is he that shall not be scandalized in me.” Nor were his anticipations unfounded, for St. Paul laments that the doctrine of Christ crucified should be unto the Jews indeed “a stumbling-block, and unto the gentiles foolishness.” But why recur to St. Paul for a proof of the existence of such weakness and folly, when we see the same vices exhibiting every day under our own eyes ? We see men of large intellect and cultivated minds hesitating to enter the fold of the true Church, although convinced of

its Divine institution, hesitating lest, by taking this final step, they may forsooth incur the indignation of their friends, the contempt of their associates, the loss of their temporal dignity or possessions; they are scandalized in Jesus Christ. We see amongst the children of the Church many who are Catholics by the accident of faith or of early training, but who, led away by pride, by human respect, by shame of the heretic or unbeliever, blush to profess openly that faith in which they inwardly believe; they join in the scoff and the jeer with which religion and its Founder and its ministers are ridiculed; they argue on the doubts and re-echo the sophisms invented by conscience, that would fain slumber in the belief that no God exists; they fear if they make the sign of the cross, or pray with exterior devotion, that the smile or the jest may be raised at their expense; afraid on the one hand to displease their friends and incur their censure; and, on the other, afraid lest they may bring down on their unhappy souls the indignation of that God whom they insult by such wanton cowardice and such miserable shame.

Indeed there are few of us, my Brethren, who are not occasionally the victims of human respect. We sometimes fear man more than God. In order, therefore, that we may correct this vicious tendency, and that we may merit the approbations of Him who has said—"Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me," let us consider first, the insult that is offered to the majesty of God by human respect, and then, the folly and impropriety of suffering ourselves to be influenced in any part of our conduct by the fears of what the world may think or say concerning us.

1. Dearly beloved Brethren, we were placed by Almighty God in this world for no other purpose than that we might love and serve Him with our whole hearts, and with our whole souls. This is the duty of every human being, no matter in what age he may exist, no matter to what country or climate he may belong, no matter for what greatness or lowliness, for what riches or poverty he may be distinguished. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." This is the great commandment addressed

by God alike to all men. Any man, therefore, and much more, any Christian who, through fear or shame of his fellow-man, neglects, when occasion requires, to manifest his love for God, or for his neighbour, offers a deliberate insult to the majesty of his Creator; he prefers the esteem of his fellow-man to the esteem of God; he apprehends the sneer or the contempt of some imbecile fellow-creature, and dreads not the anger of the Almighty; he abides by the judgment of the world in preference to the judgment of the great and living God. All created things united together bear no comparison to God, and yet the victim of human respect prefers the opinion of one miserable fraction of humanity to the opinion of the mighty Lord of Heaven, by whose breath all created things sprang into existence. What greater insult than this could be offered to God?

He who is unduly influenced by human respect transfers the allegiance he owes to God to every human being who may claim it, be he heretic or infidel; he is thus reduced to a most miserable slavery; for the ordinary condition of the slave is to have but one master, whereas the victim of human respect has as many masters as he has associates whose approbation he seeks, whose anger or censure he dreads, whose sneer or derision he is careful to escape. Such a total and capricious sacrifice of one's own conscientious convictions is nothing short of blank idolatry; for what else is idolatry but transferring our homage from the Creator to the creature? Nay, the idolator has some excuse, for he professes to act according to his conscience, although that conscience is misguided; but the slave of human respect acts against his conscience—he does exactly what he knows to be wrong, he knows how damnation is incurred, and he wantonly incurs it. How forcibly does such prevarication remind us of the language in which the Royal Prophet denounces the idols of his day! “They have mouths and speak not, they have feet and walk not, they have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not.” Those who are influenced by human respect have tongues that utter no sentiments but those which others may applaud; they have ears that watch to catch the floating opinion of the crowd, that their own may be found according to the vulgar standard; they have eyes that see not their own contemptible subserviency, and their own

wretched degradation ; they have feet that walk not in the ways of God, but follow in the wake of those that insult and deride Him. Shameful servitude ! infinitely more degrading than any physical bondage to which poverty or even crime subjects the outcast of society or the victims of the law.

One case, in which human respect most commonly exercises its pernicious influence is, where a man has been in the pursuit of sin for years, and who is now sincerely desirous to return to God, but who is deterred from the work of conversion by the fear that his new conversion of life may excite the ridicule of those with whom he had been associated in his former career of vice. What an insult does this wretched man offer to God by his despicable fears and miserable apprehensions ! He knows that he ought to return to God ; that, though late his return, yet God receives the sinner at any hour ; he knows that sin brings nothing to the soul but disappointment, sorrow, and anguish ; that it is better now to brave all difficulties and turn his thoughts heavenward, where alone true peace and comfort are to be found ; his mind is made up ; farewell sin, welcome God : but he just then remembers how he must forsake his bad companions ; how he must not now sit long and drink deep as of old ; how the blasphemous exclamations and obscene jest must henceforward be met with a frown instead of a smile ; how his penitent air will afford his boon companions an occasion for ribald mirth, and sarcastic joking ; how he must absent himself from the jovial gathering to pray, or to confess, or to receive the Body of his Lord, and how his absence will be remarked, and many a scurrilous comment greet his return to the festive throng. The temptation is too strong ; his self-love is too deeply rooted ; he gives up the idea of conversion for some other occasion, which, like the *ignis fatuus*, is always present to his views, but is constantly receding before him ; he returns to his old haunts, and his old fellow-sinners ; he relapses into all his former vices with a renovated zest, and pursues damnation with an energy and zeal that, if turned in the opposite direction, would earn for him a martyr's crown, and a martyr's everlasting glory. What an insult does this miserable man offer to God ! he prefers the esteem of some few sinful, misguided men to the esteem and friendship of his Great Creator !

But the insult to God is scarcely less reprehensible than the folly and impropriety of those who allow themselves to be influenced in religious matters by human respect. For such persons seek to meet by their conduct the approval of all those with whom they come in contact. Now, this is perfectly impossible, for, live as you please, lead a life of virtue or of sin, and you cannot. Do your best, conciliate the esteem and approval of all men; if you are virtuous, the wicked will sneer at and deride you, no matter how they may internally approve; if you are wicked and worldly, the virtuous and good will pity and reprove you. Since, therefore, you cannot be commended by all mankind, why not prefer the approbation of the good, especially as your own conscience internally approves the verdict they pronounce? It is impossible that men should all agree in any one point; their passions and prejudices will always prevent a cordial union of their opinions. Do you seek to amalgamate elements essentially discordant? You care not for the observations of men in the ordinary transactions of life. Why will you pay them such deference when the great question of your eternal salvation is at stake? Suppose all the world condemned your conduct, what matters it to you when God approves? Men will pass away, and God remains. "What art thou," says the Prophet Isaiah, "that thou shouldst be afraid of a mortal man, and of the son of man, who shall wither away like grass?" Why not choose rather the spirit of the penitent Daniel? "I covered my soul with fasting; and it was made a reproach to me; and I made haircloth my garments, and I became a bye-word to them. They that sat in the gate spoke against me, and they that drank wine made me there sing." But how was the royal penitent affected by the contempt of his enemies? "As for me," he says, "my prayer is to thee, O Lord." How different also was the feeling of the Apostle Paul. "With me it is a very small thing to be judged by you," he says to the Corinthians, and what was his glory? "I will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." Our Divine Redeemer Himself gives us a striking example of the boldness and constancy with which we should confess our faith before men. When asked by Caiaphas whether the accusations of those who were suborned against Him were true or false, He answers

nothing ; but when adjured by the name of the living God to confess if He were indeed the Son of God, see how, in reference to that holy name, He makes a full and candid confession of the truth, teaching all His followers to imitate His example, and never to be ashamed of their holy faith. Little did the early martyrs care for human respect ; they left their weeping friends behind ; they heeded not the sighs of an infidel father, or a pagan mother ; they turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of friends, who thought them little less than mad ; they went forward boldly to their doom, and with smiles on their lips, and hope beaming in their eyes, they bedewed the scaffold or the circus with their blood, while their souls passed triumphant before the throne of the Eternal God !

In fact, the approval of the world is the best proof that a man's conduct is not conformable to religion, nor pleasing to the Almighty, and the condemnation of the world is the very recompense of virtue, and the most indubitable proof of its sincerity. The views of the world, and those of God, are diametrically opposed to each other ; what the world approves, God condemns. The piety of him who is praised by the world must be always suspected. " If you had been of the world," says our Divine Redeemer, " the world would love its own ; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." You heeded not the opinions of the world when you walked in the ways of sin ; is it rational to fear them when you walk in the paths of virtue ? Ah ! are you timid and ashamed when invited to give glory to the Lord of all ? Of whom, then, are you ashamed ? Do you blush to give glory to God, who created all things ?—who, in the language of the Psalmist, " is clothed with light as with a garment, who stretcheth out the heavens as a pavilion, who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the winds." Do you blush to be the disciple of Him who rescued you from eternal damnation, and restored you to the eternal inheritance you had lost ?—who, though born in a stable, and crucified as a criminal, has monarchs for His slaves, and the world for His worshippers ? Are you ashamed of His teaching, who, abstracting altogether from His Divine character, is confessed by all to have preached the most sublime philosophy ever propounded to man ? Do you blush to follow

the standard of the cross, which has acquired more signal victories than the united dynasties of the universe? Do you regret being a member of that Church which has lasted two thousand years, and which is sure to last for ever—which comprises in its folds all the power, and splendour, and genius, and glory of the world? and do you side with those who cry up the glory of a creed of mushroom growth, and a Church of mushroom endurance? If such be your feelings—cold, weak, base-hearted Christian—well do you deserve to hear the sentence of Jesus: “He that shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him the son of man will be ashamed when he shall come in his majesty, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels.” If such weakness excites our pity, what shall be our admiration for the man who, when occasion requires, stands up for his insulted religion, and who, in the presence of bigotry and ignorance, no matter how fortified by wealth and power, with courage in his heart, and fire on his tongue, proclaims the glories of his Church, and, like a good soldier, fights her battles when cowards cringe and skulk away!

Although human respect, my Brethren, thus produces a thousand evils, nevertheless I would not have you to believe that we are always bound to profess our faith openly, and to display our religion before society or the world. There is a time for everything, and it would be indecorous, it would savour of hypocrisy and affectation, constantly and without a proper opening to parade our sanctity before the public. But when the occasion offers, then to hold back were unworthy of a man and of a Christian: if our conscience dictate to us that we should pursue a certain line of conduct, and we are tempted by shame to forego its dictate, we are bound to trample on that shame, and act as our conscience suggests, with confidence and courage; otherwise we do not deserve the name of soldiers, but rather the ignominious appellation of deserter of Jesus Christ.

Behold the lamentable example of St. Peter yielding to human respect. He who was so confident of his courage and fidelity, at the voice of a girl, denies, and swears as he denies, that he knows the very face of his Redeemer. Oh! bitter scandal; but would to God we could all repent as St. Peter repented! See how Pontius Pilate, although

convinced of the innocence of our Saviour, yet, through human respect, imbrues his hands in that Saviour's sacred blood ; proving to us that human respect was to a great extent the immediate cause of our Redeemer's death. He declared he found no cause of death in Him ; and, though the people assembling tumultuously insisted on our Saviour's condemnation, Pilate still persisted in the resolution of not staining his hands with innocent blood. But no sooner was human respect called in to support the unjust demand, and the people intimated to Pilate that he might incur the indignation of Cæsar, than he immediately yielded up the cause ; fear got the better of any other consideration ; human respect dictated the sentence ; hatred and fury carried it into execution.

Tremble, therefore, my Brethren, at the fatal consequences of acting according to the standard of human respect ; it is a subject we seldom think on, but you now see what mischief and what scandal it produces. I repeat, we are all influenced by human respect, more or less, at various times ; let us be more watchful for the future. Let us remember the denunciations of Jesus Christ against the victims of this fatal weakness : "He who shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven." On the other hand, let us remember the reward He has promised to those who profess their faith openly and courageously before the world : "He who shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven." What matter to you the scoff or the sneer of the infidel or the lukewarm Christian ? "If God is for us, who is against us ?" There is nothing so truly contemptible as to see a Christian sneering at the religion he himself professes. If there be anything more contemptible than that, it is to see another Christian seeking the applause of such an irreligious scoffer. Let us, therefore, beg of God to fill our hearts with the courage of his Martyrs and Saints, that we may never blush for the gospel of Christ ; that we may never give way to pride, except to be proud of our title of Christians, as a patent of the highest nobility ; that we may, like St. Paul, "glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." Jesus died on the cross ; let us be prepared to die in its defence.

Let us remember that we are soldiers of Christ, and that the good soldier would sooner see his heart's blood flowing than have his honour tarnished. Fighting the battle of the Lord during life, we shall deserve to receive an unfading crown from Him hereafter, who has said, "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me."

SERMON

ON PRAYER.

“At that time Jesus said to his disciples, in that day you shall not ask me anything. Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you,” &c., &c.—JOHN, xvi. 23, *et seq.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—We are all aware that the sole object of our existence upon earth is to live so that we may be happy with God for all eternity. But do we ever reflect that, if left to our own resources, this eternity of bliss is perfectly impossible of attainment? Abandoned to himself, man's condition would be infinitely worse than that of the brute creation; for the brute obeys his instincts, dies, and exists no more; but man, whose soul is immortal, if left to his own guidance, following his animal instinct, would walk with his eyes open into the abyss of eternal woe. Since the fall of Adam, man's condition upon earth is the most pitiful that can be well imagined. His reason, that glorious faculty which was once a bright beacon, guiding him safely over a tranquil sea, became obscured by the clouds of sin, and sheds a doubtful, flickering ray which he can never securely follow again. His intellect, once a bright, clear atmosphere through which that beacon-light of reason shone, became thick with the mists of ignorance, with the vapours of prejudice and error; the world was once for him a serene, unruffled sea over which he glided smoothly and unwaveringly towards the destined shore; but alas! the storms of temptations, and the tempest of passion have aroused that slumbering ocean; the billows of sin beset the hapless voyager, until without light to direct him, enveloped in gloom, and tossed by the surges of an

angry sea, he pursues a trackless course, drifting he knoweth not whither, and is dashed at length on the merciless coast, or swept into the fathomless depths for ever. But what a consolation has poor fallen man, that lone wanderer upon earth, in those dear words which I have read for you! Of himself, he can do nothing; aided by God he can accomplish all things. "Amen, amen, I say to you," says Christ, "if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you: ask and receive that your joy may be full." If you cry out to Him from the depths, He will hear your voice; if you ask Him for light to direct your wandering course, He will shed it around you in abundance; for, "every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of light"—if, like Peter, you cry out to Him from the swelling waves, "Lord, save us, we perish!" although you deserve to hear the reproachful reply, "O thou of little faith," yet the storm will cease, and a sweet refreshing calm ensue.

In a word, prayer is, if not the greatest, at least one of the greatest means of man's salvation. We obtain nothing from God without prayer; by virtue of prayer we are made sharers of every blessing which heaven can bestow. He who does not pray is doomed to perish, while the man of prayer shall live with God for ever. Such being the importance of this duty, it is the dearest interest of every one of us to consider how we ought to pray, in order that God may give ear to our petition. I will, therefore, point out to you the conditions which God requires to render our prayers acceptable to Him; but first, it would be well to consider the necessity and excellence of prayer, in order that we may more fully appreciate an obligation so intimately wound up with our eternal welfare.

Our first and chief duty upon earth is to praise and glorify God. This we do by prayer; for prayer is not only a petition to God for His favours, but an expression of homage to His Eternal Majesty. Thus, the first petition of the Lord's prayer, that prayer prescribed for man's use by our Blessed Lord Himself, begs that the name of God may be blest by all His creatures: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." It being, therefore, a constant duty of ours to bless and praise God, we are clearly bound at all times to pray, if not with the language of our lips, at least with the homage of our hearts. For this

reason, our Blessed Lord says that "we should always pray." We are all subjects of God ; he who does not pray proclaims his independence of his Creator, and, as he goes through life without recognising God, so, when he dies, God will not recognise him, but cast him for ever from His sight. Unless we pray, we can never escape the dangers that beset us in this miserable life. How can we resist temptation ? how can we bear our sufferings and crosses ? how can we conquer the devil and our passions, which hold perpetual siege against our souls ? How, except by prayer ? " Watch and pray," says Christ, " that you enter not into temptation." How can he who leaves his house in the morning, as the beast leaves his lair, without ever lifting his eyes to heaven, expect that God will protect him from the dangers that surround humanity in this daily turmoil of life ? and how can he who lays his head at night upon his pillow, without invoking the protection of the Lord, expect that his eyes shall ever again behold the gladdening rays of the morning sun ? Prayer is necessary, because without it we can do absolutely nothing conducive to salvation. For this we have the words of Christ Himself : " Without me," says He, " you can do nothing." It is so essentially necessary, that the want of it cannot be supplied by any other act of religion. Baptism is necessary to salvation, but its want can be supplied by martyrdom. Penance is necessary to those who have fallen into mortal sin, and yet the soul may be saved by perfect contrition. Those who are unable to fast may have the obligation set aside, or commuted ; those who cannot give alms to the poor, owing to their poverty, may save their souls by patience and resignation ; but nothing can supply the place of prayer. It is utterly indispensable to salvation ; for we cannot be saved without the grace of God, and, without prayer, that grace cannot possibly be obtained.

Prayer, then, being so necessary to salvation, God, in His infinite goodness and love, has extended the faculty of praying to every member of the human race, on whose soul has dawned the light of reason. Prayer is not an operation which only the talented or learned may perform ; it requires no effort of genius, no intellectual cultivation ; it is not a science to be learned from men, nor an art that is to be acquired from books or study ; it is the simple language of the heart, the impulsive utterance of the soul ;

the knowledge of it is instilled into our very being; the rules of it are engraved on the heart; and the only Master who can teach it is the Holy Spirit of God. The child on his mother's knee pours forth his lisping prayer, which wells up like the fountain, springing unto life eternal, from a heart pure, innocent, and guileless. That unpretending outgushing of the infant soul may be worded in language the simplest, the most unadorned, but it is, nevertheless, borne as a priceless treasure, by angels, before the throne of the Most High, where it ranks with the richest offerings that have been presented by hoary-headed monks, from studious cloisters, or by practised chanters in cathedral choirs. The untaught savage, who roams the desert, ignorant of God, yet conscious by nature that some great eternal Being, dwelling beyond the clouds, is the master of his destiny, kneels and prays before the Mighty Unseen One, as he thinks him, represented by the all-pervading sun, or typified by the mild, beneficent, and gentle stars. The unlettered shepherd, herding his flocks upon the mountain side, utters his unvarnished prayer to the Most High, with a heart sincere and pure, and that simple ejaculatory outpouring of an innocent soul is heard in the courts of heaven, and the humble postulant is enriched with grace; while the well-worded, elegant, and high-sounding orison of the educated, but tepid, worshipper only moves to indignation the God whom it appears intended to propitiate. Thus nothing is easier than prayer. "The commandment that I command thee this day," said the Lord to the Israelites, "is not above thee, nor far from thee, nor is it in heaven, to bring it to us, and we may hear and fulfil it in work. Nor is it beyond the sea, that thou mayest do it. Excuse thyself and say, which of us can cross the sea, and bring it to us, that we may hear and do that which is commanded? But the word is very nigh to thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." The proud and long-winded prayer of the Pharisee is despised, while the simple "God be merciful to me a sinner" of the publican pierces the clouds, and brings down upon him a flood of grace from the throne of God. Prayer is not only necessary, but it is most excellent and useful to man; by it we honour and glorify God, for prayer is an indication of religion, and is compared in sacred Saints' times to incense: "Let my prayer," says the Psalmist, "ascend like incense in thy sight." By prayer

we proclaim ourselves the servants of God ; we own our subjection to that Almighty Master ; we acknowledge Him to be the Author of all good ; we look to Him as our only refuge from danger, our only solace in tribulation, our only hope both for time and for eternity. "Call upon me," says He, "in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." The prayer of the just man is the key of heaven, it unlocks the treasures of God's graces and mercies. "Prayer ascends," says St. Augustine, "and mercy descends; high as are the heavens, and low as is the earth, God hears the voice of man." By it every virtue is confirmed in the soul ; every assault of the enemy is repulsed ; every pang soothed, every sorrow dispelled, every joy infused : "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." By prayer charity is influenced ; the soul becomes enamoured of her God ; recognises Him as the Author of every good, she embraces Him with the most devoted love. Thus, holding a sweet and frequent intercourse with Him, she soon experiences an exquisite sense of delight ; she tastes and sees how sweet is the Lord ; yes, sweeter beyond comparison than the liveliest imagination can portray, or the most earnest yearning of the heart can covet or desire. There is, in fact, nothing that we may not receive from God by prayer ; no grace, no favour, no blessing. "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you." "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you."

Seeing, therefore, the necessity, and utility of prayer, it is clearly our dearest interest to know how we should pray, in order that our prayers may be acceptable with God, and in order that we may obtain from Him those graces which may enable us to work out the work of our salvation.

My Brethren, in order that our prayers may be acceptable to God, certain conditions are absolutely necessary. Of these conditions those which are indispensable are humility, faith, confidence, and perseverance ; and there is not the slightest doubt that it is owing to the want of these conditions our prayers are unheard, and our petitions unheeded by God. We should pray with humility, that is to say, with a thorough conviction of our utter unworthiness to appear before God, or to receive any favour of His hands ; with deep humiliation, considering the weakness of our nature, and the multitude of our sins ; and with a heartfelt

sorrow for having ever displeased the Sovereign Majesty of our Creator. "Before prayer," says the wise man, "prepare the soul, and be not as a man that tempteth God;" for what else is it but tempting God, to kneel in the attitude of homage, and yet feel only sentiments of rebellion; to ask with the lips what the heart does not desire; to utter the language of sorrow, and still feel a lust for the sinful pleasures of the world? To such prayers God will have no regard; it is only the prayer of humility that He respects. "He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble, and he hath not despised their petition;" yea, saith the Psalmist, "the prayer of him who humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds." The bold, unblushing, self-reliant Pharisee comes to the church unheeded; but the humble, contrite, prostrate Publican goes down into his house justified rather than the other; for "every one who exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted." Let no man think that his prayer will be heard as long as he feels a passion for sin; to such persons the Lord says, by the mouth of Isaiah, His prophet, "When you stretch forth your hands I will turn away my eyes from you, and when you multiply prayer I will not hear." To those whose breasts rankle with the venom of unforgiveness, God denies their entreaties; and he, therefore, who would be heard, must first learn to love his neighbour, and pardon the injuries or insults he may have received: "When you shall stand to pray," says Christ, "forgive, if you have anything against any man; for if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your sins." A spirit of humility, therefore, and of all its cognate virtues of contrition, of patience, of resignation, and forgiveness, is the first and, perhaps, most essential condition of prayer; "for God," says St. James, "resisteth the proud, and giveth his grace to the humble."

We must also pray with faith, believing firmly in God's power and willingness to grant our petition. This condition is absolutely necessary, in order that our prayers may be heard; for how can we address God, unless we believe in Him? "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" says St. Paul. "All things," says Christ, "whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." How, indeed, can he expect to obtain anything from God, who either doubts God's power, or believes that God may not grant his request? If such a man would

obtain anything from God, he must cease to doubt, he must enliven his faith in God, he must adopt the advice of St. James, "Let him ask in faith nothing wavering." We must also pray with confidence. We must be convinced that God will hear our prayers. If we have not this confidence, we make God a liar; for, even in the words of my text, our Blessed Redeemer says, "If you ask anything in my name of the Father, he will give it you;" but he who does not confide in God's word thinks that God will or may refuse something, notwithstanding His promises. Whenever our Saviour performs a miracle, by restoring a person to life or health, He generally also forgives the person his sins; but almost invariably, on such occasion, He applauds the confidence of those who were so favoured. "Have confidence, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee." And for this confidence have the best and the most unshakable grounds; for "if any man sin," says St. John, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just, and he is the propitiation for our sins." Our confidence should be also increased by the consideration that it is the Holy Ghost inspires our prayers, under whose guiding influence they cannot fail to be heard; because St. Paul assures us, "He asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." Last of all, we should pray with perseverance. Many persons, after praying for some time, grow weary when their petitions are not heard, and give up the task in despair. They appoint a time for God to hear them, and if the favour is not granted at the time prescribed, they desist from what they consider a useless importunity of the Most High. They think not that, perhaps, their motives are not pure; that their request is, perhaps, unreasonable; that God wishes to try their patience; that it is through love for them He refuses what may tend rather to their destruction than to their salvation. Whether you obtain your request or not, always supposing that it is a lawful request, never desist from prayer. This is the advice of the wisest of men: "Let nothing," says he, "hinder thee from praying always; and be not afraid to be justified even to death, for the reward of God continueth for ever." "We ought always pray," says Christ, "and not to faint;" and "pray without ceasing" is the earnest exhortation of St. Paul. The blind beggar, who met our Saviour on the road to Jericho, was not restored to sight the first time he cried out, "Jesus, son of

David, have mercy on me!" No, but when he raised his voice higher, and redoubled his power, his unwearied perseverance became a kind of violence that moved the Lord to enlighten the eyes both of his soul and body. Perseverance is, indeed, the condition of prayer, because it is the greatest test of the sincerity of him who prays; and proves to God that, no matter how often he is rebuffed, he still has confidence enough to pray; still faith enough to believe in the honour and goodness of his Creator.

My Brethren, it only remains for me earnestly to exhort you to be fervent and diligent in the holy exercise of prayer. If you wish to enjoy in this life spiritual peace, and in the next eternal happiness with God, in this valley of tears, prayer is to us a means of the sweetest consolation, a never-failing source of purest joy. By its magical power every sorrow is dispelled from the soul, and a foretaste of celestial bliss infused; it is the precious metal which turns into gold all the ore of feeling, that lies buried in the inmost recesses of the mind. Where all is dark, it diffuses a radiance mellow and serene; where all is bitter, it sheds an elixir of entrancing sweetness; where all is cold, it breathes a warm glow of love; not that love which, like all things on earth, blooms for a while, and perishes for ever; but that love which, though it buds in the soul on earth, yet blossoms in heaven, to fade no more. And, oh! how wretched, how pitiable is the lot of him who neglects this saving exercise—who casts into the deep this sweet anchor of his hope!

In this world we live as exiles, banished from our native land, feeding upon the husks of swine, in poverty, anguish, and distress; our hearts ever yearning for that happy land, where alone their throbbing can be stilled, where every craving may be gratified, where every thirst may be quenched with the waters of eternal life, and our hunger appeased by participation in the plenty of our Father's house. If we are content with our lot, if we hug our chains, if we prefer bondage to freedom, and exile in a foreign land to the free enjoyment of our own, our misery is, indeed, unspeakable. But we have a merciful King, to whom the vilest outcast from His dominion may address his petition for freedom, with a perfect assurance that, not only will his prayer be presented to the throne of God, but receive a favourable hearing; that his petition for liberation shall be granted,

and then he shall be restored to the home for which his heart is breaking; that there he shall meet the loving father or the tender mother, who sweetened his woes even in this vale of tears; that he shall there embrace, after an absence of years, the child of his bosom, whom he fancied he should never behold again; that there weeping and sorrow shall be no more, for "the former things have passed away;" that joy then, and only joy, shall prevail in this region of endless delights. If any one who knew that by a simple petition he could procure for himself this termination of his woes, and the enjoyment of those eternal pleasures, neglected to employ such easy means for his deliverance, would you not consider him mad? Would his fate any longer move you to pity? would it excite one sympathetic emotion to learn that, after his exile here, from which he might have been so easily released, he is now cast into that dungeon of eternal darkness and woe, whose gates are never opened, and through whose walls the light of God's countenance shall never shed one cheering ray, through all the countless ages of eternity! Oh! then, my Brethren, if you hope for salvation, pray, and pray well, pray with the conditions I have pointed out; with faith, believing that God not only can, but will, hear your entreaties, for Christ our Lord has said, that "all things are possible to him that believeth." "Amen," said He, "I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, be thou removed and be cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatever he sayeth shall be done, it shall be done unto him." I say unto you, all things whatsoever you shall ask, when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they will come unto you. Pray with confidence, knowing that if you ask your father for bread he will not give you a stone; with humility, like that of Abraham when he said, "Shall I presume to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes?" and with perseverance, like that of David, who has said, "I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be always in my mouth." Praying thus, you shall bring down from heaven the showers of God's graces upon your souls, which will sweeten all the toils of life, and prepare you for the enjoyment of eternal bliss, in that happy land where you shall have no further need of prayer, and where every utterance of the soul shall be an outpouring of love, of praise, and jubilation to the Most High, for ever and for ever.

SERMON

ON THE PASSION.

“He was wounded for our iniquities ; he was bruised for our sins.”—
ISAIAH, lix. 5.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—Forty days of penitential mourning have nearly passed away, and heaven and earth with universal accord will soon sing forth their hymns and canticles, and alleluias of joy. Forty days will but have just expired since the words of Joel were ringing in our ears, exhorting us to be converted to the Lord in fasting, in mourning, and in weeping, and soon the Church of God will resound with hosannas to the Highest in commemoration of the greatest miracle Omnipotence hath ever yet achieved ; yet, of those forty days of sorrow and of tears, the fragment that remains is the saddest, the darkest, the bitterest of all. Could you, at this moment, cast your eyes round about the world, you would see the altars of the Lord no more adorned with that pomp and magnificence her children love to shed around them ; but stripped of their decorations, their gems, and their flowers, and looking cold and dreary to the Christian eye. You would see those proud temples raised to the Almighty in foreign lands, where His glories are sung and His name is adored by faithful millions, no longer displaying to the enchanted vision the choicest graces of architectural splendour, but hung from roof to floor in the dark drapery of funeral sorrow. The thrilling tones of solemn bells swell not now from the lofty spires and steeples ; hushed are the melodious sounds of exultant music through their spacious aisles ; and the voices of His ministers, who, but a few months hence, sung anthems of praise and joy for the nativity of the Babe in Bethlehem, now chant in plaintive chorus the inspired language of woe in celebration of the

last melancholy mystery of our redemption. The Church of God is oppressed with sorrow and gloom, "weeping," as the prophet laments, "She hath wept the night, and the tears are on her cheeks; there is none to comfort her amongst all that are dear to her;" her children multiply their fasts and austerities; they send forth to heaven more ardent prayers, and mingle tears with the expressions of gratitude and praise. Oh! could we at this moment pierce the privacy of many a lonely cell and chamber, how many devoted worshipers should we behold pressing to their lips the sign of our redemption, and bedewing the sacred emblem with tears the brightest and dearest mortal man can shed.

But why this voice of universal woe, why this mourning and weeping in the Church of God? It is because she commemorates on this day the bitter Passion and ignominious death of her own beloved Spouse, Jesus Christ, the only Son of the living God. It is because she looks back beyond the last eighteen hundred years, and sees with weeping eyes the Divine Saviour of men hanging like a malefactor between two thieves on a disgraceful cross, with a crown of thorns upon His head, with cruel nails bored through His sacred hands and feet, with His tender flesh bruised and scored in every limb, with that blood which rescued a world from damnation, welling in streams from His sacred veins, and with a rabble crowd of infuriated monsters pouring out against Him all the venom of insult and malice that rancour could suggest or ribaldry interpret. It is because she feels, with sensations of the bitterest affliction, that it is the iniquities of her own children that have brought her beloved Jesus from the glories of heaven to the ignominy of Calvary; that it is they who have pierced those hands and feet, and sent the blood gushing from every sacred pore; in fine, it is because she seeks, with tears of penitential sorrow, to soothe the anger of heaven excited against sinful man, and to implore that He "Who was wounded for our iniquities, who was bruised for our sins," would, on this, the anniversary of His death, impart to us that mercy and pardon which He lived and died to purchase from His Heavenly Father for us all.

If we wish, my Brethren, to participate in the benefits acquired for us by the sufferings of our beloved Saviour, let us, in God's name, this night join with our holy mother the

Church in contemplating with deep sorrow for our sins the tragic drama of the Passion, the unspeakable horrors of Calvary, where Jesus died amidst the shouts and insults of the traitorous Jews.

Were we, my Brethren, to trace the entire course of that bitter Passion, from the first pang of agony in the garden of Gethsemane, to the last expiring sigh on Calvary, and dwell on that tender love manifested for us in every throb of that Sacred Heart, the morning's sun should rise, and find our task unfinished. For, that the great God who exists from all eternity, and who shall exist beyond the stretch of human fancy; who was infinitely happy in Himself, and whose glory no shadow of pain could for a moment cloud; whose omnipotence can call worlds into existence, and crush them again into their original nothing—that He should come down from His eternal throne, and, like an outcast from the race of men, should suffer such anguish as all that man ever endured could never equal, and all this to rescue from perdition even the souls of His executioners—is a mystery of love which His own infinite conception alone can embrace. Hence we must be content with viewing that boundless love as it shines forth for us in the more remarkable features of His Passion, and still feel assured that we have only glanced over the surface, and not fathomed its unfathomable depths.

Before our Divine Redeemer's sufferings had yet in all their intensity commenced, we behold Him performing a most stupendous miracle of love for us, as a prelude to the love displayed on the bloody hill of Calvary. We see Him seated amongst His chosen twelve (the dearest children of His bosom, from whom He was so soon to be torn by His enemies), and there leaving them, and by them to the world, His own body and blood as a pledge of His everlasting love for man. Oh! who can fathom the depth of this our Jesus' love for us, the very night of His Passion; the night when He was to feel the lonely horrors of Gethsemane; the night that He was to be betrayed by one who sat at that sacred table; the night when He was to be kicked and buffeted, and spat upon in Caiaphas' hall; the night that Peter was to swear he never knew Him! That then He should have no other thought but man's happiness and man's glory, exceeds, indeed, all human power to conceive; yet so it was. He then thought, my Brethren,

of you and of me, as if you and I were alone in the world. He thought of the weary days of our lonely exile, how, wandering through this vale of tears our souls should sigh, with their heaven-born instinct, for the good things of Sion ; how, sick and faint, they should totter on the way, unless refreshed by the manna of life, not by "the food that perisheth ;" and thus He bequeathed to us that bread which angels dare not taste, to strengthen us in our journey to the land where we expect, let us hope not in vain, to be filled for eternity with the plenty of His Father's House.

And now, Christian soul, come with me. Let us go forth through the darkness of the night from the hum and bustle of Jerusalem, and crossing the brook Cedron, let us wend our way through the olive groves that lie beyond. There is the place called Gethsemane ; it is lonely and silent, and the night wind sighs but faintly through the melancholy trees ; the stars are shut out, and the spot so interwoven with the destinies of mankind is given over to gloom and desolation. Prostrate on the earth, with His hands clasped in a paroxysm of woe, sad and alone, His long hair hanging in damp and disordered curls over His shoulders, and huge drops of blood starting from His pallid face, lies a human being, human to all appearances ; with the form of mankind, with its physical weakness and more than its share of hereditary sorrow ; for in the annals of human suffering, we hear not of any, save Him, from whose brow grief ever forced that sanguinary exponent of its bitterness and its intensity, now appealing to heaven in superhuman fervidness of entreaty ; now downcast, horror-stricken, inconsolable, yet all-sustaining ; a Being placed, one would imagine, beyond the range of mercy or compassion, the butt of all the arrows of misery, and the victim of innumerable death-agonies which will not kill, that His suffering may be prolonged ; a living epitome of all the men of sorrows whose hearts were ever seared or blighted by misfortune. And who is this victim ? And why has sorrow chosen Him for this relentless sacrifice ? My Brethren, this is Jesus, the Son of the living God ! It is He who made that earth which is humid with His life-blood ; who made those stars that glorify the arch of heaven, and the clouds that veil their brightness ; whose commanding voice hath ranged those scerried ranks

of trees, and who breathes in those gentle winds that whisper through the trembling leaves. It is Man God, and why is he here, "treading the wine press alone," why bent beneath this crushing sorrow? "My soul," He cries in unutterable anguish, "my soul is sorrowful even unto death." He, the mild, the gentle, the uncomplaining, cannot bear this woe; His soul is sorrowful even unto death; weary, weeping, trembling, He sits on the cold earth, on which he has fallen three times, helplessly prostrate. Where is His Mother, Mary, in this hour of His desolation? Why is not her hand here to lift that drooping brow? why are His friends and disciples absent, when He needs them most? Why is He thus forlorn and companionless? Oh, sin! thou art the cause. "He was wounded for our iniquities. He was wounded for our sins." He took upon Himself the crimes of the whole world to be expiated by the last drop of His sacred blood. The hour of His self-sacrifice has come; and of all the stages of His Passion, perhaps this is the most bitter, the most torturing. Amidst the gloom of the garden He turns on every side, but finds no comfort, no consolation. On one side, He sees, drawn in dread array, all the iniquities that man had ever committed, or ever would commit, to the end of time, crying out for the blood of the victim-God; on the other, He beholds, lowering over his soul, the horrible shadow of sorrow, even to death. Think not that, because He is God, His sufferings are diminished; nay, on that account, they are rather intensified, to an infinite acuteness. As the Omniscient God, He sees those sorrows bearing down upon Him, like the hideous, destroying monsters of a feverish dream: as helpless man. He cannot avert the doom, but succumbs, in the impotence of exhausted nature, to the crushing weight of inexorable pain. And this is thy work, O man! this is the triumph of thy sated passions; those blood-drops, forced from the brow of the meekest of men, are the trophies of thy war with God. Worse in thy malice than the Archangel in his pride; he, with blind rashness, dared high Heaven; you bruise the bruised reed; he coped with the Almighty power of his Creator; you crush your Saviour in His dying hour. O cruelty of sinful man! you drive your Divine victim into darkness and solitude; you cast Him to the earth, bathed in the crimson streams of His own most sacred blood; you

shed over His soul a sorrow, impregnated with all the bitterness of death ; you hold up before His vision the chalice of agony, which He must drain to the very dregs, before another sun shall set ; you abandon Him ruthlessly to His wretchedness ; and, while the angels of heaven weep over His unmitigable sorrows, you sleep on, in the undisturbed repose of a remorseless heart ! Three times, in the weaker nature of the Saviour's humanity, shrinking from the frightful ordeal before Him, He cries out to His Heavenly Father, begging that, if possible, the bitter chalice might pass away from Him ; but that Father, His only refuge 'mid the horrors of His desolation, seems deaf to His forlorn entreaties. Three times He goes to His apostles, to beg that they might join their prayers to His ; but, alas ! He finds them wrapt in slumber, and unconscious of the horrors that darkened their Master's soul. An angel from heaven comes down to console Him, but only begs that He may not decline the expiation of our sins ; and so Jesus, the Divine victim of mortal sin, lies prostrate on the cold earth, the only Being, amid the wide range of God's creation, without a ray of comfort to cheer Him in His miseries ; forgotten by His creatures, and almost unthought of by the Creator, the Great Giver of all consolation. But, see ! a light breaks through the darkness that hangs round Gethsemane, and the voices and footsteps of approaching men are heard through the stillness of the starless night. Perhaps some tender hearts are moved to compassion ; and perhaps some gentle voices come to pour the balm of consolation into the Saviour's ear. Alas, no ! What ! and must another drop of bitterness, still more bitter, be added to the cup of Jesus' sorrows ? Oh ! yes ; for the glaring light of the midnight torches reveals to His sacred gaze the features of the traitor Judas—of one who sat that night at His sacred table, and who now comes with a kiss, the emblem of peace, to betray his Master, for lucre, into the hands of armed men !

Follow the afflicted Jesus, now abandoned by all His friends, to the Court of Caiaphas, where, if any ray of consolation yet gleamed through His sorrows, it was extinguished by the fall of His beloved apostle, Peter. Oh ! was not this affliction sufficient of itself to wring with agony the soul of the tender Jesus ? to see him who was so loved by his Master, the very Prince of the Apostles,

fall into a blasphemous denial that he ever knew Him! See how, after confessing that He was the Son of God, those monsters of iniquity cry out, "Blasphemy! blasphemy!" How, like so many furies let loose from hell, they rush upon their unresisting Victim, and discharge upon Him all kinds of blows, and affronts, and injuries! how they spit upon their Saviour's face, and disgorge their filthy phlegm upon His sacred forehead! how they scoff and ridicule Him! how He stands, with His hands tied behind His back, to offer less resistance to their insults; thus fulfilling the words of the prophet, "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like the lamb before his shearer, he opened not his mouth." In fine, see how He spent the night amongst those demons, the horrors of which no Evangelist has attempted to describe, and whose secrets of iniquity shall not be revealed until He comes, the God of Vengeance, on the judgment day, 'mid the terrible glories of Jehosaphat.

When morning dawns on the horrors of that dreadful night, are Jesus' sorrows to have an end? No; for then He is led forth through the streets of Jerusalem to the court of Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, by a brutal mob thirsting for His sacred blood. He who, but a few days before, passed through those same streets in triumph, when the same people strewed His way with palm-branches, now is led along, a miserable captive, to meet the inevitable sentence of a cruel death. Submissive, yet undaunted, He stands before the heathen governor, who is so stricken with his innocence, that even he seeks to set Him free; but the crowd will not be satisfied, and so the humble Jesus is led away to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate, clothed with the garment of a fool, a subject for mockery and derision to all His savage spectators. See how Pilate, as if to gratify the bloodthirsty Jews with something less than our Saviour's death, orders Him to be scourged at a pillar, and so the humble Jesus is stripped of his clothes, and bound to that pillar, as if he were a wild beast, and not the mildest of men. See how He is scourged by those brutal soldiers till the blood comes streaming from every pore, and the flesh is torn from His sacred limbs; and yet amid those nameless tortures, He sheds no tear of sorrow for Himself, but only thinks of saving sinful man!

In this miserable state of body and soul, Jesus is led forth into an open court, where He is seated upon a stool for a throne, clothed with a red garment as a mock-king: with a crown of thorns upon His head, and a reed for a sceptre in His hands. There He sits with streams of blood gushing down His sacred face, while those barbarian soldiers bend the knee in mockery before Him, and say with tones of feigned submission to His regal power, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Oh! my Brethren, let us too bend our knees in spirit, and not only our knees, but our heads, and hearts, and whole being, in adoration of Him who there sits, not only King of the Jews, but King of kings, and Monarch of worlds unnumbered. Let us behold Him as He there sits, with a Divine meekness beaming in His downcast eyes, and no swelling of indignation ruffling His sacred bosom against the monsters who surround Him. Ah! little they knew (though they should have known), that He who sits before them, in that garb of misery, is no other than the only Son of the Living God: "the figure of His Father's substance, and the splendour of His glory;" that it is He who but spake, and myriads of worlds bounded into light: that it is He who, as the Psalmist sings, "hath put on praise and beauty; who is clothed with light as with a garment; who stretcheth out the heavens as a pavilion; who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the winds; who hath founded the earth upon its basis; it shall not be moved for ever" (Ps. ciii.). Little they know, as they strike that sacred face, that He could, with a word, call forth legions of those bright angels that attend with flaming swords on His Divinity, to crush each mocker into dust, and fling down the precipice of hell each soul that dares to scorn the majesty of His Godhead! But the fatal blow is suspended by His mercy, for the work of redemption must be consummated on Calvary, with the last expiring sigh of Jesus.

A few moments more, the insulting alternative of Jesus or Barabbas being accepted in favour of the robber and murderer, a thousand voices rend the air with shouts of exulting madness, "Away with Him, away with Him: crucify Him, crucify Him." A few moments yet again, and we behold a spectacle from which our common humanity shrinks with ineffable horror and disgust, the Divine Redeemer of men toiling up the Hill of Calvary,

beneath a heavy cross, which He must bear to the place of execution, and on which He must hang, till He expire. The last drops of that perspiring brow start forth, and mingle with His streaming blood. The scourge of the executioner reveals new gashes after every faltering step: the infuriated rabble shout and exult over every fresh agony of their victim. Jesus' supernatural strength is at length exhausted by accumulated miseries, He thrice falls beneath His fatal burden, for oh! it were easy to bear that pile of wood, but to bear each sin of Adam and Adam's children—that permeated its very essence, there was the ingredient of its weight, that unnerved the limbs of Jesus, and cast Him prostrate on the blood-stained earth; and yet, when some tender-hearted women wept tears of sympathy for His sorrows, see how He forgets His own sufferings, and thinks only of the sins that have occasioned them. "Weep not," He says, "for me, ye daughters of Jerusalem, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

And now the moment is come for this cruel mob to be satiated with the sight of our Saviour's last expiring agonies, and Jesus arrives with His heavy load at the height of Calvary. Behold your Redeemer, drooping to the earth, desolate and abandoned, with scarce one friendly voice soothing Him in this extremity of woe, scarce one friendly sigh compassionating His sorrows! Behold Him nailed on the ground to the rude rough cross with coarse nails pierced through His sacred hands and feet, from which, as from His whole body, the blood flows in copious streams! See how He opens not His mouth to ask for milder treatment; see how no deprecating glance issues for the sympathy of the beholders; see how he is gradually lifted up into the air, and how, at length, the huge cross falls into the cavity prepared for it, with a jolt that shoots new pangs through all His sacred frame; see how through His sacred limbs each bone is distorted from its place, till the words of the Prophet are fulfilled, "They have dug my hands and feet: they have numbered all my bones." He is lifted up, and as the furious rabble behold Him raised above their heads, they rend the air with shouts of triumph and brutal exultation that rend the soul of the compassionate Jesus. Oh! let us for a moment go to the foot of Calvary, and behold with different eyes that scene on which the cherubim and seraphim look with wonder and admiration. Christians,

behold the victim Jesus as he there hangs between two thieves, with the scornful motto over His head, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,"—with barbarous soldiers and an infuriated rabble, making the cup of His sorrows more bitter by their blasphemies and reproaches. Behold Him with His sacred head drooping on His chest; His face pale and besmeared with gore, from the thorns that pressed His sacred brow; His heart's pulse beating gradually slower and slower as the moment of death draws near; His mortal thirst only mocked with the sedatives of vinegar and gall; His whole body bruised and lacerated; and His soul, oh! yes, it is his soul that truly feels the sharp arrows of affliction. Martyrs have suffered tortures that defy the conceptions of human fancy; they have been torn limb from limb, they have been roasted slowly to death, they have languished in filthy prisons, 'mid worms and insects, and in the end have been brought forth and devoured by lions and tigers to gratify the curiosity of Roman Amphitheatres! But amid those horrors, sunbeams of gladness shone over their souls, for they saw in visions the bright halls of heaven opened to their gaze, and the arms of the Omnipotent and His angels stretched out to receive them, until they forgot their pains, and felt even on earth the absorbing joy and bliss of heaven. Not so with Jesus; from Him all comfort and consolation had fled. Man had cursed, condemned, and crucified Him; hell had opened its gates and let forth its demons against Him; each sin that man had ever committed, or even would commit to the end of time, rose before His all-seeing vision, and inflicted a separate crucifixion. You and I, alas! rose too before His Divine soul, and were seen to shout, "Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him!" No angel now descends from the black vault of heaven, with the light of comfort gleaming on his golden wings, for His Heavenly Father has Himself abandoned Him, till we hear Him crying out in all the agony of utter desolation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

And why all this, O Jesus? Why art Thou forgotten and forlorn, as if Thou wert an outcast from the human race, and not the Lord of angels and of men? Oh! why, but because Thou canst show Thy love for man no better than by shedding for him the last drop of Thy sacred blood, and suffering for him all the anguish which heaven can afflict,

or Thy sacred soul endure? Christians, weep for your Saviour, since no one else will do so. But what have I said? Does no one weep for Jesus? Oh! yes, there are a few at the foot of that sacred cross who weep, but who only increase His sorrows by their affectionate tears. Remarkable above those weeping few, are two whose tears of sympathy flow with more than common profuseness for the dying Jesus. These are His Mother, Mary, and the penitent Magdalen. Oh! see that tender Mother, of whom it had been foretold that "a sword of grief should pierce her soul." "All you who pass by the way, attend and see is there any sorrow like unto her sorrow." See how her eyes are red with weeping, and her heart ready to burst with an agony of woe. Oh! mothers, think what would be your feelings of sorrow, if you saw the child of your bosom, innocent and good, dying naked on a rough cross before the gaze of cold and brutal men, and then you may have some faint idea of this tender mother's grief. Behold Magdalen, who weeps so much, not for the sorrows of her Saviour, as for the part which her own iniquities have had in His present affliction and distress. On her cheeks the tears of sympathising woman commingle with those of the repentant sinner. Go, Christians, join your tears with those of this holy pair; weep with Mary for the sorrows of your Saviour, and with Magdalen for your sins, which have nailed Him to the cross.

For the space of three hours that Jesus hung upon the cross, the sun refused to give his light; dark clouds floated sadly through the sky; thunders rolled, and lurid lightnings lent a more funeral tinge to the pall-like aspect of the heavens. His tender heart had forgotten the cruelty and impiety of His executioners, and He had prayed, in broken accents, for their pardon and forgiveness, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Seeing the fatal moment was at hand, He had exclaimed with a loud voice, "It is consummated," and then had cried out, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." A huge eclipse darkens the face of the earth. Nature, in her sable and terrific dress, pauses for the dread event with all the appearance of awe and terror. A horrid stillness prevails. Suddenly, the earth trembles, the veil of the temple is rent, the graves open, and the reanimated corpses of the dead wander once more upon the earth, in all the grim

ghastliness of the tomb. The saints of the Old Law, so long imprisoned, await the coming of Him who was to rend their prison-bars asunder; the Eternal Father, surrounded by His myriad angels, looks down expectant from His imperishable throne, when, 'midst the tremulous silence of eternal space, lifting up His Sacred Head, the Divine Jesus dies! He is dead: dead. Who is dead? Jesus, the only Son of the Living God; God Himself. Oh! sinners, behold the work of your hands, behold the sacrifice you have sought; suspended betwixt earth and heaven, torn, livid, bloodless, lifeless, hangs the body of Jesus, the victim of your iniquities, the victim of His own tender love. Sin! thou hast done thy bloody work; thou hast pierced with thorns that brow where meekness loved to sit enthroned; thou hast besmeared with gore that beauteous face; thou hast rent with whips and cords that tender flesh; thou hast opened those sacred veins, from which the last drops of life-blood have just ebbed. Sin, art thou satiated? Thou hast put God to death; what greater sacrifice couldst thou exact? But thy triumph has recoiled upon thyself; His death has crushed thy destructive power. "Death," He cries, "I will be thy death." Sin can kill eternally no longer; it is Jesus who is now victorious. Oh! death, where is now thy victory—Oh! death, where is now thy sting?

However we may moralize on the sufferings and death of our Divine Redeemer, however we may admire the unspeakable love displayed by Him for us in every stage of His bitter Passion, there is one conclusion to which we should come; there is one practical resolution we should make. That conclusion is, that sin is the greatest of all evils, the greatest insult we could offer to God, inasmuch as every repetition of it has, of its own nature, a tendency to force the Son of God once more through the terrible ordeal of suffering which we have just contemplated. That resolution should be, never again to offend our God. Is there any one in this vast assemblage who has listened attentively to the recital of Jesus' sufferings, and would wantonly commit an act by which He would be driven once more through the agonies of Gethsemane, and the death-woes of Calvary? Forbid it, nature! Forbid it, heaven! I shall not weaken your abhorrence of sin by any other argument than the one I have used, namely, the bare

spectacle of the miseries endured by the Son of God on its account. Him who views that picture, and sins again, beholding it, no other argument could move. Woe is him indeed; yes, woe to those who meditate on Jesus' sufferings, and derive no moral of amendment from the sacred theme! Woe to those to whom Good Friday comes, but comes in vain, and Easter Sunday brings no spiritual joy! If we have hitherto offended our Gracious God, let us remember that His mercies are above all His works. The history of God's Saints is the history of God's mercies. Behold His Apostles! poor fishermen of Galilee; once weak and trembling, they march through the world with the courage of giants, armed only with the cross of their Master, and shed their blood with smiles of joy for that Master's sake! Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of the Christians, is converted into Paul the Apostle of Christ; "the Lamb," says St. Augustine, "who was slain by wolves, converts the wolf into a lamb." "If need be that I glory," cries out St. Paul, "I will glory in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world."

Augustine himself, that miracle of sanctity, and prodigy of genius, squanders the flower of his youth in luxury, wantonness, and infidelity; but his admiration for the heroes of antiquity is suddenly lost in his love for the Victim of Calvary; his tears for the sorrows of a fabled queen are turned to wailings for the agonies of his Saviour; and his enthusiasm for the high-sounding periods of Cicero is exalted into ecstasies for the eloquence of Jesus.

Ignatius, the wayward soldier of a worldly king, is converted into an immortal champion of the King of Glory; while Xavier, the pampered child of fortune, lays his wealth, his nobility, his youth and beauty, at the feet of his crucified Saviour; and, leaving his beloved Spain, wanders away to lands where rage an Indian sun and Indian ferocity, to announce the Gospel of the Lord, and preach the glories of the cross. Kings and princes have wearied of the glories of the world, and, at their Master's call, stripping off their royal robes, have followed in sackcloth and ashes the footsteps of the "Man of Sorrows;" and, exchanging the sceptre for the cross, have won an unfading crown in the kingdom of their Saviour. Millions of men, at various ages of the Church's history, have meditated on the Passion of the Lord; and, while they might have lived and died the

slaves and victims of sin, have freely shed their very life-blood to testify their devotion to Jesus of Calvary; and so, instead of sharing the everlasting torments of the damned, they now reign in glory and jubilation, with the never-fading wreath of martyrdom encircling their brows, loving and beloved by the Almighty.

So, my Brethren, shall it be with you, if you meditate as you ought on this great subject; your souls are precious in the sight of God as those of His Saints or His Apostles. He shed His blood for you as well as He did for them. He makes no exception when He says, "He who would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." His cross is a cure for every sin; "If your sins were as red as scarlet, they shall be made as white as wool." It is a soother for every sorrow: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." It is riches to the poor: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It is food and drink to the hungry and thirsty: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall have their fill." Well, indeed, might St. Paul exclaim, "I will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," for the glories of this world shall pass away, but the glories of the cross shall be celebrated for myriads of eternities. If Jesus asks us this day to meditate on His sufferings, it surely is, that we may be brought to a sense of our danger, and fly to Him for pardon and forgiveness. See how He receives the last sighs of the penitent thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Does He not love each of us as much as He loved the penitent thief? Is He not the Father of the prodigal child? Is He not the Shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep, and sought the one that went astray? Oh! go to the foot of His cross with the penitent Magdalen, and shed tears of sorrow for His sufferings and your own sins; and when the glorious morning of His resurrection comes, go forth with her to meet Him, no more with tears, or if it be, with tears of joy. For you the forty days of Lent shall close with mourning; but when they will have passed away, a day of joy and holy exultation will break forth, when weeping and sorrow shall be no more, but peace, and a serenity of soul, which sin can never give, and which sin alone can take away. If this night you ask your dying Jesus for this grace, think you He will refuse you? Ah,

no! He has suffered too much for you to refuse you this small favour: and while your eyes are fixed on Him, forget not her who stands at the foot of the cross, and feels in her soul each pang that pierces His Sacred Heart; forget not the Immaculate Mother of Jesus. Remember that He has consigned you to her maternal care, in the words addressed to His beloved disciple: "Son, behold thy mother!" Ask of her that she may obtain for you pardon of your sins, and the grace never to offend Him more. And when the day of His second, His glorious appearance, comes in the valley of Jehosaphat, let us hope that He will welcome each one of us to the kingdom of His glory, in the sweet consoling words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Then shall we rejoice for an endless eternity, that on this night we were converted to Him, who was "wounded for our iniquities," who was "bruised for our sins." Oh, Jesus! God of mercy, God of love! Oh, Divine Lamb! who hast sacrificed Thyself for our salvation! O Victim, consumed by the fire of Thine own sorrows! grant us the grace to love Thee as Thou dost deserve to be loved. Oh! would that we could die for Thee, as Thou hast died for us. Hitherto, alas! we have lived for ourselves, for our passions, for our sins: grant us, for the remainder of our lives, to live only for Thee, Jesus, our God, our love, our all! Amen.

SERMON

ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

The multiplication of the loaves and fishes.—JOHN, vi.

THE miracle here recorded, performed, as it was, so strikingly and so manifestly in opposition to the law of nature, cannot fail to excite in our minds the most profound astonishment. An immense multitude of people, numbering about five thousand, attracted by that inexpressible charm which ever attached to our Divine Redeemer, followed Him across the sea of Galilee, forgetful of their homes, their occupations, and their physical wants, and thinking themselves amply repaid for their privations if they could only catch those delightful words that fell softly and vivifyingly as the dews of heaven from His sacred lips. The tender heart of Jesus was touched by their self-sacrificing devotion, and, grateful as He is for the slightest exhibition of love from His creatures, He could not leave unrewarded a self-denial so perfect, and an attachment so sincere. He ordered the multitude to sit down upon the grass, and taking five barley loaves and two fishes, the only eatable things within reach, He so multiplied them that not only were the multitude satiated, but twelve baskets were filled with the fragments of the feast. This was truly a most stupendous miracle, calculated to exhaust all the resources of our praise and admiration. In striving to comprehend it, we become convinced of the littleness of reason; in believing it as God's unerring Word, we are impressed with the magnitude of faith, and are forced to exclaim with the Psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone doth wonderful things."

And yet, if we are filled with admiration in contemplating the magnificence of this miracle, and if we give glory

to God for the power and love evinced in its performance, how comes it that we regard with indifference far more astounding wonders wrought every day under our own eyes by His omnipotent hand? Is not the creation, and, perhaps still more, the conservation and government of the universe, a far more stupendous miracle than that recorded in the Gospel of this day? Who was it that filled and fed the multitudes beyond the sea of Galilee with a few loaves miraculously multiplied, but He who every day feeds and fills the millions of the world with the fruits of the earth, in comparison to whose enormous produce the few seeds from which they spring are infinitesimally small? Who was it that multiplied the two small fishes, but He who fills the immense depths of the ocean with those numberless living creatures, which, after having supplied the wants of the human race, leave a vast remainder that seem to exist for no other end than to excite the wonder, and extort the praise of man? And yet we behold these wonders of Providence unmoved; we regard them as ordinary events, as if they were matters in which we had no concern—matters which seem to have no claims upon our admiration, much less upon our gratitude to God. How different was the conduct of the multitude, as described in the Gospel. When they saw their wants so miraculously supplied, they cried out in amazement, “This is of a truth the prophet that is come unto the world,” and they were about to take Him by force and make Him their king. What a lesson may not we Christians, we followers of that wonder-working Christ, learn from the example of those poor unevangelized, untutored men! It is time that we open our eyes to the wonders of God’s Providence with which we are surrounded, and of which this miracle is so striking a symbol; it is time that we offer the long-denied homage of our hearts to that eternal benevolence which has created us for bliss, and which sustains us by its invisible power until we attain that end. It is strange, my Brethren, that from constant familiarity we are unmoved by certain spectacles which, seen for the first time, would excite, in the most intense degree, the passions of our souls. Thus, if a man born blind were suddenly restored to sight, in what language could he convey to you the feelings of his soul in contemplating the marvels of creation? What would be his delight, his astonishment, his

instinctive outburst of praise to the Great Creator on beholding the beams of the summer sun, the boundless expanse of ocean, the smiling fields, the lofty mountains, the descending shades of night succeeded by the light of the placid moon and stars! But we have seen them from our childhood upwards, and only by forced reflection can we think of the Almighty hand, and the unbounded love from which they spring. Divine Providence strews the pathway of life with wonders, and we see them not, or we ignore them. Thus, man is deprived of much merit, and God of much praise and glory which are His due. Let us then, for a few brief moments, sit in fancy on the summit of some majestic mountain, alone with God, and contemplate His ways to man, that we may learn two useful lessons, to confide in His Divine Providence with courage and hope, and to submit to it with docility and resignation.

And where shall we turn, and not see the most striking evidence of this supreme and beneficent Power—conducting, sustaining, moving, and governing all things? We see God in the light and warmth of the celestial luminaries; in the succession of seasons; in the alternation of night and day; in the abundance of the earth for the uses of man; in the regular motion of the innumerable spheres around us; in the harmony, and beauty, and wisdom, that reign throughout all creation. “How great are thy works, O Lord!” said the Psalmist, “thou hast done all things in wisdom; the earth is filled with thy riches.” And not only in the general management of the universe do we discern His Almighty Providence, but in the special care which God takes of all the creatures of His hands, and chiefly of His greatest creature—man. Go where you will, and God is your guide, your protector, and your safeguard. “He hath given his angels charge over thee, lest perchance thou knock thy foot against a stone;” and again, “If I go up to heaven, thou art there; if I descend into hell, thou art present; if I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” The very disorders which we perceive in the moral world prove the existence of a ruling Providence; for how can we call it disorder unless it be a departure from a principle of order, which exists somewhere? It exists, namely, in the Providence of God, which, for its

own wise ends, permits evil here to be mixed with good, that the evil may be punished hereafter, and the good rewarded, and thus the balance of order be adjusted for eternity.

It is not wonderful, indeed, that the Pagans of old, who had only an imperfect notion of the Deity, should have busied themselves so much in supplying the wants of life, and in meeting the exigencies of nature; that they should have limited their hopes and aspirations to the goal of the grave. Sitting "in darkness, and in the shadow of death," it is not wonderful that they were ignorant of a Divine Providence controlling human affairs; that they should have regarded themselves as the makers of their own good or evil fortunes, and deemed their deities no less than blind instruments of destiny, incompetent to govern the world. But for us, my Brethren, who are enlightened, and who recognise a beneficent Providence, devoted to our protection, and ever mindful of our wants, would it not be to run counter to the lights we enjoy, and to belie the faith we profess, if we gave ourselves too much concern for the things of this passing world? And this is what Christ has taught us in His Sermon on the Mount: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you;" and "Be ye not solicitous what ye may eat, or what ye may drink, or wherewith ye may be clothed, for after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." What more do ye want, my Brethren, to quiet your fears and apprehensions, than to know for certain that your affairs are in the hands of God—in the hands of a Being whose all-merciful eye is ever directed to your wants and necessities; whose wisdom knows how to provide for you; whose bounty is inexhaustible in your regard; whose Providence is equal to preserve in existence what His power was able to call forth from nothing; whose far-reaching care robes the lily of the field in a glory surpassing that of Solomon? Or how can ye imagine for a moment that that Great God, whose attributes are, as they are, boundless, could abandon to distress or destruction man, the noblest work of His Almighty hands? that He could act thus, of whom the Psalmist sings, "Thou openest thy hands, and thou fillest with blessing every living creature." He who made

the seasons to succeed each other, that the earth might give forth its fruits in good time ! And if this God, of such magnificence and bounty, has sometimes seemed to forget you, be assured it was not so, until you had first forgotten Him. Be faithful to Him, and the sun shall fall from the heavens ere He abandon you. "They that seek the Lord," cries out the same Psalmist, "shall not be deprived of any good." Do you seek proofs of this Providence of God ? Then open the Sacred Page, and read. Behold it in the preservation of the Israelites in the land of Egypt, and the infliction of plagues upon their enemies, until they were delivered from bondage. Behold it in their safe passage through the Red Sea, while Pharaoh and his chariots and horsemen were sunk in the wave. Behold it in the manna of the wilderness, and in the miraculous fountains of Horeb ; in the bread provided for the starving Elias, and for Daniel in the lions' den. Behold it in the miracle by which a few loaves and fishes were made to feed five thousand souls. But why seek for individual examples ? Is not the whole Sacred Word a continuous record of God's unspeakable Providence in behalf of man ?

You, my Brethren, nevertheless, sometimes complain and murmur against this adorable Providence of God, when the world ceases to go well with you. And why does not the world go well with you ? Why do you not succeed in your projects, in the acquisition of this good fortune, in the gratification of this ambition ? It is because you defy Providence, or act as if no Providence were there ; you seek by every means to protect yourselves against accident, as if your safety depended on yourselves alone ! and you fear not that that Providence, which you outrage by your contempt of it, may laugh at your designs, and confound the false wisdom of your plans. Tormented with anxiety to increase your store, or with fear lest you may lose it, you spend your days in trouble and alarm, in hopes and disappointments : you amass, and God scatters ; you plant, and God uproots ; you pretend that you are only endeavouring to supply the wants of nature, but Providence tears off the mask, and reveals the avarice and cupidity of your heart. If you trusted in Providence, indeed, you would have no anxiety for the morrow ; but the very fear you endure shows that your trust is not in the Lord, but in yourself.

Many are the pretexts you make to justify this defiance of Providence, and this cupidity of your heart ; you admit that, in all pursuits, your eternal salvation should hold the first place ! but you add that, at the same time, it is necessary to have wherewithal to live, to support a household, a family, an establishment. Both these statements are quite correct, and all would be well if you acted in this spirit. But you seek to gain the goods of life by crooked ways, by over-industry. Two short reflections will show that cupidity, and not true Christian seeking, is at the bottom of your desires. Do you not seek the goods of life more eagerly than the goods of eternity ? Are you content with what is barely necessary, or do you not seek much more ? What is this but cupidity ? Is it not to subvert the order which God has established, to love the creature more than the Creator ? to prefer earth to heaven, to choose time before eternity, that which passes, to that which does not pass away ? And the ardour with which you seek the goods of earth most clearly proves how much you prefer them to the goods of heaven. You have, for example, been warned again to subdue that imperious pride, that ungovernable anger to which you are a victim ; to repress that passion for intoxicating drinks ; to wean your tongue from those blasphemies and obscenities ; to be reconciled to the enemy whom you have offended : but you are occupied with the cares of the world, and the remonstrances of conscience plead with you in vain. I will think of my salvation, you say, when I have succeeded in this or that arrangement—when I have settled my affairs. But, my Brethren, if this devotion of yours to temporal affairs be just and reasonable, the danger to you is that it would go so far as to make you forgetful of your God, and insensible to the interests of your immortal soul ! It is permitted to you to provide for your temporal affairs, but surely it is not permitted you to neglect the affairs of eternity ; it is permitted to work for the world, but you must not forget that there is a world beyond the grave, for which you must labour more. How different is it with the true Christian ! Convinced of his noble origin and his glorious destiny, persuaded that here he has no lasting city, all his desires turn heavenwards ; and if sometimes he is forced to turn his eyes to earth, and struggle for the necessities of life, his soul is tranquil with every variety of fortune ; he acts without

concern or emotion, because all his desires are regulated by reason and by faith ; he seeks only what he wants ; he is content with his daily bread. God tells him to ask no more ; and if once he raises his head above poverty, there is nothing he fears so much as abundance, for woe, says the Scripture, is the portion of the rich.

My Brethren, let us always remember that whatever God wishes to happen shall happen ; that no man can oppose His Divine Will. "All things," say the Saints, "are in thy power, and there is none that can resist thy will." It is, then, of necessity that we submit with docility and resignation to the decrees of Providence, for these decrees shall be executed, whether we will or no. If we yield to them, we shall fulfil our duty ; if we oppose them, they shall oblige us, in spite of us, to carry them out. He who strives to resist God is like the ocean in a tempest ; its waves rise frantically from the depths, and seem to grasp at heaven ; but, mount they ever so high, they fall back worsted in the vain attempt ; for they must obey the voice of Him who said to the deep, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther ; and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves."

And if inanimated nature obeys so faithfully the order of the Creator, if the earth remains fixed on its basis, and the sun and stars move unwaveringly in the orbit prescribed for them by Eternal Wisdom, how comes it that man alone, the noblest work of all, should rebel against his God ? Is it for this he received the glorious gift of reason, that he should signalize himself amongst all creatures by his disobedience ? that reason, which was bestowed upon him that he might do homage to his Maker, that he might render Him fit worship and due submission ; that he might adore that Supreme Power which created, and that Supreme Intelligence which governs the universe ! Strange error of man ! Know you not that God alone can have an arbitrary will, for He alone is independent, and superior to all other beings that exist ! God would cease to be supreme, if man could do as he pleases. Let, then, the Almighty Power execute His will according to His pleasure ; and let us, weak and finite creatures, be content to obey.

If you act in this spirit, God will be with you, and you will prosper. Behold how He stood by the patriarchs of old, who trusted in Him ! He sustained Jacob in his exile, and Joseph

in his bonds, and Moses amid the contradictions of a rebellious and idolatrous people. Submission to the will of God presents to us in Job a model of patience the most heroic, in the midst of sufferings impossible to conceive. Animated by this spirit, the Apostles and first Christians remained firmly attached to God, in long fasts and vigils, in chains and dungeons, in good and evil fortune: in all that happened they beheld the finger of God; in prosperity and adversity, they equally blest the Lord. Happy indeed is he who resigns himself wholly to the will of God, who throws off all reliance on himself, and places his body and soul in the safe keeping of the All-loving and the All-wise! Peace of mind is the first fruit of this submission, as it is the foretaste of that eternal peace which is to be its reward. Without this submission there is no peace. "Who has resisted him," says Job, "and had peace?" Tranquillity of mind follows the man of resignation, through crosses and adversities, the same as lighted his pathway in the hour of success: and never, you may be sure, was the soul of Job more joyous than when, in the moment of his utter misery and destitution, he cried out, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Thanks beyond measure, exclaims the true Christian, to that good God, to that wise Providence, who has humiliated me, and steeped me in affliction: because, in this state, I have the means of saving my immortal soul; of procuring true peace and tranquillity of spirit; of becoming humble, penitent, and resigned; of detaching myself from creatures, and uniting myself irrevocably to that God who never abandons those that trust in Him. Oh, my God, continues the true Christian, I make this declaration to-day, before the altar, that I, and all I am and have, belong to Thee. It is not want, or sickness, or humiliation I dread; I only fear that I may disobey Thee. Do with me as Thou wilt. Nature may murmur and repine; but, not my will, but Thine, be done. Take then, my Brethren, good and evil alike from the hands of God, for He knows what is best for you. If good come, accept it with gratitude; if evil, bear it with patience and resignation. Only ask, at all times, that the holy will of God may be fulfilled in you, that it may be done on earth as it is in heaven; for if on earth, like Christ, you carry your cross, like Christ in heaven you shall wear the crown.

SERMON

ON FILIAL OBEDIENCE.

“And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.”—ST. LUKE, ii. 51.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—The leading events of our Blessed Saviour's life are commemorated on the several Festivals and Sundays throughout the year; and reference is made to them in portions of the Gospel recited at the Sacrifice of the Mass. Between the finding our Divine Lord with the Doctors in the Temple, and the commencement of His public career, an interval of eighteen years elapses, and the history of that long period is summed up in the few words which tell us that Jesus went down to Nazareth with His parents, and “was subject to them.” During that large passage of the Saviour's life, He, the Divine Model of every virtue to mankind, affords to children the most perfect pattern of filial piety and obedience. Shining through the *vista* of centuries, the light of His example comes to illumine us to-day on this solemn obligation; and as, by the communion of Saints, the links of relationship are not sundered, even in death, the lesson is addressed to us all; for our parents, though dead, are our parents still, and may be assisted by our prayers and good works, when no other manifestation of honour can be made.

Jesus, then, is the model of children, Son of the Eternal Father—equal to Him in all things, omnipotent, and independent; but, by becoming man, by bringing Himself down to the level of humanity, He at once subjected Himself not only to His Father, but to His own creatures, Mary and Joseph. Here is a most profound mystery of abjection, a most sublime lesson to the human race, a most glorious model of domestic life. Children, who dare

to despise the precepts of God, who dispute the rights of parental authority, who proclaim the liberty to govern yourselves, go, if indeed you be followers of Christ, if your hopes for eternity be founded on the Christian faith, go to Nazareth, and there contemplate the King of kings; behold Him who created the heavens and the earth, renouncing His own will, and voluntarily subjecting Himself to the will of two mortal beings, called into existence by His breath, the work of His own Almighty hands.

The obligation of children to their parents is threefold; namely, an obligation of honour, of reverence, of service; and I will ask your attention while I show you how far this triple duty is founded on the dictates of reason and religion.

First, with regard to honour. This includes respect and love. Why then should we respect our parents more than other persons? For this reason: that, just as God, because He is the first principle of our creation, is entitled to our respect more than any human being whatsoever; so our parents being, after God, the authors of our existence, we should respect them most, after God. Indeed the respect due to God and to parents has been always designated by the same expression, namely, filial piety, this being the love of a child for its father, whether temporal or eternal. The father is entitled to this respect on account of the exalted position he holds towards his children. He is to them the representative of God. He is bound to teach and administer to them God's law. He is, as it were, a king in that small state called the family; there he exercises a sway with which nature has invested him, and which is confirmed to him by the ordinances of religion. This authority in the parent has been sanctioned by the unanimous voice of all the peoples that ever existed in the world. Even among savage tribes the rights of paternity have ever been regarded as sacred, and have never been infringed with impunity. Those intimate relations, commonly called the ties of blood, operate more powerfully than any other influence on the human mind. The same Providence which has elevated the parent to a position of authority has implanted in the breast of the child an instinct of submission which cannot be acted against without a strong revulsion of the natural moral sense. This cry of blood ever rings in the ears of huma-

nity ; all men hear it, all men obey it ; he who uproots it from his nature goes forth, the shunned of men, with the callousness of Cain in his heart, and the brand of Cain upon his brow.

A Pagan sage of antiquity beautifully paints this picture of filial obligation as he saw it in the dim mirror of nature only. "There is," he says, "on earth, no image of the Divinity more worthy of respect than our father and our mother ; they are visible deities ; we were born in their houses, as it were, in their temples, so that we should offer to them sacrifices of honour, of love, of allegiance ; we should feel in their presence as we would feel before an altar." This sentiment of a Pagan philosopher has been approved by the Sacred Word of God, which apportioned the same degree of denunciation and punishment to filial impiety and to blasphemy. "Accursed, is he," saith the Lord, "who honoureth not his father and his mother." "He who shall strike his father or his mother, let him die the death."

In the early ages of the world, before cities were built, or society formed, the father was the sovereign in his family ; he rewarded and punished, and from his court there was no appeal. The manners of human life have changed since then, but the natural authority of the parent has not been annulled. Circumstances only obstruct or limit its operation.

We should, then, respect our parents ; we are bound also to love them. Respect without love is but a cold formality ; love without respect is no more than passion ; but love and respect combined are the most exalted tribute which the human soul can pay to a superior being. Such is the tribute we owe our parents, more than to all other beings, after God. Why ? Because they are, as I have said, the authors of our existence ; and because there was no labour which they would not undergo, no danger which they would not risk, no sacrifice which they would not make, to promote our true happiness and welfare. Thus the love of a parent, and particularly of a mother for a child, has passed into a proverb. It is the deepest, the tenderest, the most delicate, the most ineradicable feeling of the human breast. It is a love that absorbs all other affections—a love stronger than the love of life itself. Woe to him who treats that love with contumely, who resists its pleadings, and contemns its warnings !

Woe to him who wrings with anguish a mother's heart, and unlocks the sacred fountain of a mother's tears ! It were better for him that he had never been born. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and that despiseth the labour of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the brook pick it out, and the young of the eagle eat it." To you who love your parents, what name of earthly names is dearer or more sacred than the name of a mother ? She was the first and truest friend you ever had. She watched over you with unceasing care through all the dangers that beset you, from the impotency of the cradle to the independence of your manhood. When others fled in consternation from your sick bed, from the spectacle of disease, and the horror of contagion, she never abandoned you, but stood through weary days and sleepless vigils, wrestling with death as with a wild beast that had come to ravish from her the life which was dearer to her than her own. When slanderous tongues sought to defame you, she was still the champion of your reputation, and the uncompromising guardian of your innocence. Whatever of good was in you, her love magnified a thousand-fold, while your weakness and errors melted away like mists before her gentle vision. She wept with you in your sorrows ; she was confounded in your shame ; she exulted in your joys, and she gloried in your triumphs. In the sympathies or congratulations of other friends, you always feared the hollow heart ; but no shadow of doubt or suspicion ever fell across the bright outpourings of your mother's love. Hardened though you may have been by contact with the coarse world, yet you always listened with reverence and awe to the words of your mother's counsel or reproach. Nought else human had power to subdue your sternness, or to melt your soul to tears. Her advice was like the appealing voice of God, and you heard it with fear, and you obeyed it for love. Her ambition was, that you should be good, that thus you might be happy. In this hope she lived, and rejoiced ; for this consummation she prayed with all the fervour of her soul. It was her earnest longing, as she trembled in hope and fear on the threshold of eternity ; it will form the burden of her intercession to God, until you meet her in the happy land. Blessed is he who loves his mother thus ; but woe to him whom a mother's tears and

entreaties fail to move ! There is for him no surer sign of reprobation ; for what agent of conversion can forbode success, when this, the gentlest, and yet the most potent of all, has essayed the task in vain ?

Besides the tribute of honour which we owe our parents, we are also bound to show them reverence : that is to say, we are bound to acknowledge our dependence on them, and to obey them. The authority over us with which God has invested them entitles them to our allegiance. The human mind naturally sighs for freedom ; and there are those who would shake off even the salutary restraint of parental sway. But no sophistry or sentiment can prove the justice of this assumption ; for, be you as free as even your own imaginings depict, you must bow down before some superior power. As long as you are in the world, moving amongst your kind, there must be restraints to prevent your liberty from degenerating into license, lest, by your excesses, you mar the well-being of yourself or your fellow-men ; you are not free from dependence on God ; society claims the right to control you ; the State regards you merely as a part of a great machine, set moving in a fixed direction for the well-being of the whole. By these laws your liberty is checked, and you admit the justice of the arrangement. Why, then, should you feel humiliated by being placed in subjection to your parents, whose power over you is natural ; whose love protects you like a shield ; and whose very punishments are inflicted not for the general good, but for your own temporal and eternal welfare ?

You recognize, then, the right of being dependent ; and the practical recognition of this dependence is obedience. The parent who gave you life may justly prescribe the mode in which that life ought to be conducted, and that is, according to the law of God, which the parent is bound to administer. If, then, you wish to obey God, you will obey your parents, through whose mouth He speaks to you. Amongst those whom St. Paul classifies as certain to incur damnation, namely, the covetous, the haughty, the proud, blasphemers, and the like, he includes those who are disobedient to their parents. Your parents are answerable to God for your salvation ; this motive alone should induce you to obey them. But for a child to obey his parent is not only a duty, it is an advantage, nay, a necessity. Can

a child live of itself? Left to nature alone, how long could it subsist? Has it wisdom sufficient to avoid the shoals and quicksands that beset its voyage on the ocean of life? Where is its sagacity to encounter dangers and difficulties? How poor a guide is reason for youth, when its action is thwarted by a vivid imagination, a rapidity of impulse, a warmth of passion! Without the sage counsel of a loving parent, how soon is the rash son or daughter lost in the fatal meshes of sin and ruin! The misfortune is, that children never see their error until poverty, or the grim spectacle of death, stares them in the face, and the remedy comes too late. Witness the miserable end of Absalom. Witness the tardy repentance of the prodigal son. How many thousands of children are lost for ever, because they would not bow to the yoke of parental authority! One becomes a gambler, and dissipates his fortune: another delivers himself up to debauchery, and cuts short his life in the very flower of his age; another rushes from crime to crime, and is only checked by the prison-cell, or perhaps the scaffold. Good God! what a fate. But may it not, in truth, be said that the vast majority of the vices that prevail in the world, all the excesses and disorders, tears and heart-burnings, horrible diseases and premature deaths, which startle our ears and shock our feelings every day of our lives, spring originally from this gigantic source of evil, the disobedience and insubordination of children to their parents? The disobedient child is accursed by God, and his career is never long in this world. The blight of heaven's malediction is on him, and he perishes and rots beneath its deadly blast. "Accursed is he who honoureth not his father and mother," saith the Lord.

The last obligation we owe our parents is that of service; we are bound to assist them in their necessities; to provide for them in their illness; to comfort them in their old age, and to console them in all their afflictions. If children complied with this portion of the Divine precept, how much anguish and misery, poverty and ruin might be spared to the world! But sons and daughters, led away by the devil and their own passions, turn their backs upon their parents, on those who gave them the life which they enjoy, and who sustained them in its perils, through many long and weary years. The pang that pierces most bitterly the human heart is the sensation that it has been treated

with ingratitude, and that ingratitude is always the more cruel in proportion to the love which it will not repay. No tongue can describe the gall and wormwood of anguish that rankle in the heart of a mother who has been despised or neglected by the child of her bosom. And hence, the All-just God vents His fiercest wrath on those who treat their parents with ingratitude. "He that afflicteth his father, and that chaseth away his mother, is infamous and unhappy," saith the wise man. "He that stealeth anything from his father or from his mother, and saith this is no sin, is the partner of a murderer," saith the same inspired writer. Is it not natural justice that so great a crime should bring down the vengeance of the Great God on the offender? One who acts in this manner has lost the title, the character, and the privileges of a child. "Take a ray out of the sun," says St. Chrysostom, "and it shines not; a stream from the fountain, and it dries up; a branch from the tree, and it withers; a limb from the body, and it rots: so, remove a child from devotion to his parent, and he is no longer a child." We do service to our parents when we solace them in their troubles, and, in the pure joy which a faithful child feels in this good work, he may recognize some small share of that reward which God pays to virtue even here. When length of years silvers over the head of your parent, and chills the life-blood in his veins, be then, above all, his comfort and support. "Son," saith the voice of God, "support the old age of thy father, and grieve him not in his life. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy strength, for the relieving of the father shall not be forgotten. And in justice *thou* shalt be built up, and in the day of affliction thou shalt be remembered, and thy sins shall melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather." On your parents' death-bed, you should redouble all your previous care; and when they have passed away from this world of toil, you should remember that they may still stand in need of your service; you should pray with your whole heart to God for their eternal repose.

From all I have said, my Brethren, it is easy to see that he who loves his parents thus shall merit the benedictions of heaven, the least among which is a long and happy life even in this world. "Honour thy father and thy mother," saith the Lord, "that thy days may be long in the land."

The Scriptures are profuse in their praises of good children, and in describing the rewards which they shall receive. "He that honoureth his mother," saith the wise man, "is as one that layeth up a treasure." And cannot our own experience point to many men in this life whose success and high-standing, even in the world's esteem, may be traced to the love which they bore their parents, and above all to their mother? "He that honoureth his father," say the Scriptures again, "shall have joy in his own children, and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard;" and again, "Honour thy father in word and work and all patience, that a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain to the latter end."

Let, then, the sacred model of Christ and His Mother Mary in Nazareth be ever before the eyes of children and of parents; Mary portraying the love, the grace, the majesty of motherhood, and Jesus showing forth the honour, reverence and service which form the threefold duty of a child. In a household hallowed by such mutual charity, peace and its thousand blessings shall abound: for Mary will love that mother who imitates her virtues, and Jesus will guard the son who takes Him for an example. The world and its cares, and the wickedness of men, shall invade the peace and happiness of your home too, and for few shall the eighteen years of their Nazareths flow in serene, uninterrupted course: but love, superior to every trial, will never sunder the true parent and child. The filial piety that burned like a sweet aroma in the tranquil cottage of Joseph was the same that distilled in drops of balm from the lips of the Man of Sorrows on the cross, when He bent His last flickering glance on the Mother of Sorrows beneath, and faltered forth the dying words, "Mother, behold thy Son." So be it with you. Let your love for your parents be the same in sorrow as in joy, in your Calvaries as in your Nazareths; because, for you too the hour of affliction shall pass; and whither Jesus and Mary have gone, you shall follow, to receive from the hands of your Eternal Father length of days, not in this transient world, but in that land which He has prepared for the everlasting joy and glory of His children.

SERMON

IN AID OF THE MATERNITY HOSPITAL.*

“When Tobias thought that his prayer was heard, that he might die, he called to him Tobias his son; and said to him, Hear, my son, the words of my mouth, and lay them as a fountain in thy heart. When God shall take my soul, thou shalt bury my body, and thou shalt honour thy mother all the days of her life; for thou must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee in her womb. . . . Give alms out of thy substance, and turn not away thy face from any poor person; for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee.”—TOBIAS, iv. 1, *et seq.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—All things that have been written in the Sacred Scriptures have been written for our instruction and edification; and we must, therefore, regard these words, addressed to his son by Tobias at the solemn hour of anticipated death, as admonitions conveyed to ourselves from the very mouth of God. Of the paternal advice of the patriarch, I have selected that portion which I deemed best suited to the object for which we are here assembled, that object being, “that we may give alms out of our substance, and turn not away our face from any poor person; that so it may come to pass that the face of the Lord may not be turned from us.” But it is not for this reason only that I have chosen for your instruction these words of Tobias. They appear to me also to supply an argument precisely adapted to the specific object of our consideration to-day; for we are met to join in alleviating the sufferings of woman under circumstances which commend her to our peculiar sympathy and care; at the hour when, subjected to pain and anguish the most intense, her life is exposed to imminent peril; and when the life, and even eternal happiness of her progeny, are equally verging on destruction. If we be, in the words of Tobias, “mindful

* Preached in SS. Peter and Paul's Church, Cork, May 31, 1868.

of what and how great perils our mothers suffered for us in their wombs," we may be moved to compassion for the sufferings of our mothers. If we prize the blessings of existence, the dignity of children of God, the hopes of a happy hereafter; if we would give glory to our Creator, and help in saving from ruin hundreds of infant souls whose destiny is to swell the eternal canticle of jubilation before His throne, we will lay these words "as a fountain in our hearts," welling out in streams of charity, wafting those blessings and those hopes to the unborn of the poor: "Out of the mouths of infants and sucklings perfecting the praises of the Lord."

We thus, my Brethren, naturally discover the threefold interest in which we are this day concerned; the cause of woman, the cause of infancy, the cause of God: and without further preface, I will show you how, in the interest of these three causes, we are bound to exercise our charity, that golden virtue which radiating towards man on the one side, and God on the other, brightens and enriches the human soul. And first with regard to the special claims of woman on our charity.

Woman is man's helper. "Let us make him a help like unto himself," saith the Lord. She is, therefore, deserving of his gratitude and indulgence; she is weaker than man, and for that reason requires his protection and assistance; her religious and moral perceptions are more delicate and refined than man's, and she, therefore, demands his deference and respect. The higher honour man shows for woman, the better for the welfare of society: degrade woman, and society with her becomes degraded and corrupt. As in a family where the presiding woman is irreligious and immoral, the domestic management is imperfect, the notions of virtue vague, and its practice null; so, where the matron is virtuous and devoted to the duties of religion, all goes well; the father labours for the support of his family, feeling no further responsibility; the children are watched and cared, and nurtured in sentiments of moral rectitude; the consequences of which are peace, and harmony, and love. As it is with the family, so it is with society, as affected by the influence of woman in general. If she be insensible to the dictates of honour, self-respect, morality, and religion, those who surround her participate in her indifference, and gladly accept that freedom from restraint which it is in her power to impose; and which, in the

interests of man's moral well-being, it would be injurious to disparage, and fatal to withdraw. If, on the other hand, woman be permitted to exercise that moral power with which God has invested her; if she be respected and honoured; if she be regarded as the protectress of virtue, the guardian of purity, the trustee of innocent childhood, the stern rebuker of passionate manhood—the society in which she moves is blest by her benign and gentle sway; vice flies from before her face; passion cowers beneath her glance; she becomes the “valiant woman,” lauded in the Sacred Scriptures; “far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her.”

Like every other moral blessing which we enjoy, this salutary recognition of woman's dignity is entirely owing to the Christian religion and its Divine teachings. Before the coming of Christ, woman was regarded as only the slave of man, and the instrument of his vile passions and pleasures. But the Saviour of the world raises her to the position to which she was always entitled; and His Church develops His views with regard to her. Woman is declared to be the equal of man in origin, in destiny, in the distribution of grace. She is the child of God, and the co-heiress of Jesus Christ. In His Virgin Mother, He presents the highest type of woman in the Christian dispensation; elevated to that stupendous dignity, under circumstances calculated to inspire the very humblest with hopes of grace and salvation: “Because he hath had regard to the humility of his handmaid, therefore shall all generations call me blessed.” In the honour He showed to Martha and Mary, by His visit and His miracle, He foreshadows the respect which the Church vindicates for virtuous women; in the forgiven and favoured Magdalen, He presents to posterity the model of woman's regeneration under His *regime*, and her restoration to all the rights of Christian subject; which are such as are sacrificed only by sin, and won back only by repentance. The Church faithfully interpreted the doctrines of her Master on this point, and diligently followed in His footsteps. She proclaimed the sanctity of the marriage tie, and limited man to one sharer of his conjugal affection. She announced, by the mouth of St. Paul, the praises of virginity; which praises were subsequently echoed by her Cyprians, her Ambroses, and her Jeromes. She went still further, and by

sanctioning the principle of the cloister, she withdrew millions of the sex, in the first blush of beauty and innocence, from the myriad temptations to which they were exposed in the world, offering them as a sweet incense before the Lord ; and presenting in their persons, to their relinquished companions, the brightest models of purity, that virtue which is the most priceless ornament of man ; but the very essence of the charm, the dignity, and power of woman.

The sphere of woman's duty may lie within narrow limits ; but within these limits her capacity for doing good is very great. It is as wife and mother her efficiency is best contemplated, and in that double relation she possesses an unlimited power for evil as well as good. "A diligent woman," says the wise man (Prov. xii. 4) "is a crown to her husband ; and she that doth things worthy of confusion is as rottenness in his bones." As wife, what deeds of unrecorded, unpanegyriized heroism has woman achieved ! deeds of patience, deeds of self-sacrifice, deeds of deep suffering and long endurance, deeds of hard trial, and inextinguishable love. Should the partner of her existence wander from the path of duty, how bitterly she feels for his folly and his guilt ! how tenderly she exhorts him to reformation ! how artfully she strives to win him from his errors ! how patiently she waits for his conversion ! Here woman's nature truly resembles the Divine, and confirms the faith which tells us that her soul is like to God ! Should grim disease visit the abode of the wedded pair, and smite the man in the pride of his strength, oh ! who can paint the woman there ! her anguish of heart glossed over with smiles of encouragement, her sleepless nights, her incessant care, her utter self-forgetfulness, her devotion even to death ! But it is as mother that woman presents the sweetest, the most touching, the most endearing, the sublimest aspect. She loves her child with an all-absorbing, over-pursuing, haunting love. His infant face is an ocean in which her heart swims and bounds with delight ; she watches his precarious growth with suspense and anxiety, with alternate hope and fear, as one might watch a tender plant which is fostered by showers and sunshine, but which a storm-blast may wrench at any moment from the bosom of the earth. She builds up for him a glorious future in her proud imaginings ; and should she be the truly valiant

woman of the Sacred Scriptures, loving and fearing God, she trains him up pure and undefiled, like the royal mother of the French King Saint, telling him that she would, with all her love, see him dead at her feet, rather than he should offend his God; and while other mothers hold up before their sons a future of worldly pomp and pride, as the goal for their attainment, she paints for her offspring an endless hereafter, in comparison to whose glory and joy the gauds and pageants of this world are not even the types of a type. Should the object of her love pursue the course desired by her, how great is her joy and self-congratulation! His every triumph is her triumph, the applause which he wins brings double gladness to her. On the other hand, should he turn aside from her teachings, and pursue the paths of iniquity, then her grief is the saddest grief that ever blighted human heart; for grief is the counterpart of love, and mother's love has no equal in intensity. Should death snatch him from her in the freshness of youth, or the vigour of his manhood, her life is, as it were, buried with him in the grave; she walks the earth, but her thoughts and feelings are not of it; her day of bliss is prematurely overcast; the night shade of sorrow has fallen on her soul, and her only wish is that she may die and be at peace for ever. This mother's love, so pure, so tender, so intense, begets a corresponding feeling of affection in the child, which is clearly designed by God to be the stimulating principle that may entice and win him to virtue and duty. He who truly loves his mother can scarcely do wrong—he would do nothing which he knows would give her pain. Oh! who would force by a wilful fault one tear of sorrow from his mother's eye? What son could behold unmoved the anguish of her who gave him birth, much less, cause it by his own wilful misconduct? Such a thought is revolting to all the finest feelings of our nature: no wonder God should visit so great a crime with special punishment. The eye that despiseth the labour of his mother in bearing him, “let the ravens of the brook pick it out, and the young of the eagle eat it.” Amongst the noblest feelings that ever stirred the ambition of youth, is the hope by success to bring joy to one's mother, to feel the swelling, the exciting pride of repaying in some measure the love of long and many years' duration, love never wearying through every variety of feeling, perhaps through

every vicissitude of fortune. Oh! the bliss, to light up with smiles that dear face; to make her forget, even for a moment, the troubles that must ever cloud a mother's pathway; her sorrow, perhaps for lost ones—her debts, her difficulties, perchance her poverty, and to awaken in her breast the hope that a faithful son shall be her champion, to fight her battles, and win her victories; to conduct her through the peaceful valley of declining years, and mingle her ashes with kindred dust in a consecrated grave. And with the mother's death, the love of the true son dies not, but, mingled with grief for the dear departed, becomes more fixed, and it might be said more sacred. Whatever he undertakes suggests to him the speculation as to what she would think and advise, were she still amongst the living; he is careful to do nothing which may cast a slur upon her memory, nothing which she, if still on earth, could condemn or deplore; her name is mingled with his prayers; translated to heaven, she becomes his guiding star through the night of time; he seeks inspiration at her grave; and when, in some noble work, his labours are crowned with success, and he receives the guerdon of applause, his cup of pleasure is dashed with one regret, the bitter thought that she is no longer there to share his triumph, to participate in his luxury of doing good, to feel the joyous consciousness that she had faithfully discharged the noblest duties of a Christian mother.

My Brethren, I have said that we are met to alleviate the sufferings of woman under circumstances that commend her to our peculiar sympathy and care. After the fall of man, she, who had so largely participated in his guilt, should also share in the sad results of his condemnation; she was made the object of a special malediction at the mouth of God. "I will multiply thy sorrows," said the Almighty, "and thy conceptions; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." From this general woe no woman has ever been exempt. His own Mother, innocent as she was, was no exception. She had to seek the refuge of a stable in that trying hour, there being no room for her in the inns of Bethlehem! To many the ordeal is made endurable by the ease which wealth affords; but to the poor, alas! how many comforts are denied; and how painfully their sorrows are intensified by privation! Nay, how many, for want of proper care, are, as it were, wrenched

out of life, often in the first bloom of womanhood—in the early years, perhaps months, of married life; their offspring perishing with them, or left behind to struggle for existence amongst apathetic nurses, never to repose upon a mother's breast—never to know the blessings of a mother's love! And there are views of this case that invest it with a peculiar charm in the eyes of the charitable. The wife, desirous for a new bond to strengthen the affection of her husband, to present him with a common object of their joint love and solicitude; the anticipated pleasure of bringing up her child in the way he should go; of having something to love, to watch, to guard and foster, to be proud of; not to live on earth in vain, but to be useful; to fulfil her mission in the plenitude of woman's capacity and obligation: or, to die at this critical hour; to quit for ever the partner of her love; to lay all these delightful hopes aside, and perish with them! Oh! my Brethren, the fate of hundreds such as this one I depict is in your hands under God. Will you save them, or consign them to death, and to the shipwreck of their brightest hopes and purest joys?

But, my Brethren, this is not alone the cause of woman; it is also the cause of infancy—let me rather say, the cause of our common humanity. For you have to-day to determine the fate of hundreds of unborn beings; whether they shall enjoy the blessings of temporal existence, and eternal happiness, or whether they shall never open their eyes upon this world, or share the glories of the next! Consider for a moment the blessings of which you may deprive them; to live on earth, and to be happy for all eternity with God! What a blessing is it barely to exist! to open one's eyes on this lovely spectacle of nature, and read thereon the handwriting of God; to see the glorious light of the sun, at once expanding the majesty of the mountain, and painting the daisy in the valley; and thus to picture to one's self the sunshine of the Almighty's countenance in the better land, enwreathing the martyr's halo, and at the same time smiling welcome on the sinner, repentant in his dying hour!—to view the abounding ocean, type of God's immensity, and the fruitful plains, emblems of His bounty and munificence!—to gaze on the placid moon and mild stars in the blue expanse, and to conjure up the gentle love, and mother-

like watchfulness, and universal regard, which these orbs of the firmament, like so many eyes of the Deity, symbolize; to look on all, and think of the Wisdom that created it; to look on all, and think that it was made for man.

Oh! the sublimity of the thought! Who would not enjoy the bliss of earthly existence! Who would deny its enjoyment to another!

And then the hope of life eternal! the consciousness of being a child of God and heir of heaven! to be enriched by His graces, and enchanted with the sweets of His peace; to know that you were made by God; that having lost His favour, you were redeemed by His Divine Son, at the cost of His very life-blood, and that your lot is to be happy with Him for all eternity! And then, when this life is over, to enjoy that bliss; to enter those mansions of eternal joy; to share the delights for ever, such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." These are the blessings which you are asked to extend to hundreds of unborn children; these are the blessings which you will deny them, unless you are to-day under the influence of that Divine and benignant virtue which is the only true bond of human kindred.

But, my Brethren, high and above all motives influencing us to do good, should be the desire to promote the glory of God; and in this work before us, that glory is most immediately involved. Hence I have said that to-day we are dealing also with the cause of God. We promote His glory by keeping His commandments, and it is His commandment that "we love one another." It is His commandment that we "give alms out of our substance, and turn not away our face from any poor person." By succouring, therefore, those who appeal to you to-day, you further the glory of God, and fulfil the end of your creation. And this you do, not broadly or vaguely, but in a most direct and special manner; for God loves every human soul, and in His unspeakable condescension He deigns to receive an increase of glory from the homage of His humblest creature. By saving those little children, therefore, from eternal ruin, by ushering them into life, and, through the grace of baptism, entitling them to the joys of heaven, you promote in the most pointed manner the glory of God, and fulfil the end of your creation and theirs.

But, it may be asked, why do not these women seek refuge in the workhouse hospitals, where skill and care are equally at hand to relieve them?

This brings us to the business view of the subject. The hospital whose cause I plead is now in existence for seventy years; and on close and impartial inquiry it is easy to learn, from all quarters where information can be gleaned, that during that long time its results have been admirable in the extreme. From the printed Report of last year it will be seen that the number of women admitted to the hospital was 434, and that, with a single exception, all derived the fullest advantages which it is possible for such an hospital to confer. Four physicians, of the very first skill in their profession, are unremitting in their attendance; and I have been assured in the most emphatic terms, that but for the existence of this hospital in our midst, many, very many children would either have perished in the act of birth, or subsequently for want of that tender care and nourishment which are essential in the first days of infancy; so that it will be seen what I have said on this subject has been no rhetorical exaggeration, but a stern and solemn fact, of the very gravest import. The class of people who find refuge here are the humblest in society, but yet, with that justifiable pride so innate to the people of this country, a class that would think itself degraded if branded with the stigma of pauperism. Again, in the workhouse the friends of the patients are not permitted to visit them, except after long intervals, whereas here the sufferers may receive the solace of friendly intercourse at certain hours every day. And there is one peculiar advantage connected with this hospital, namely this; strange as it may appear, many women of drunken habits find their way into the hospital, some actually in a state of helpless intoxication as they enter. What would be the result if these unhappy creatures were to undergo the ordeal of childbirth in their own wretched homes? It is easier to imagine than describe. But what is the effect of their treatment here? All that care, cleanliness, abstinence, wholesome diet, shame, and cool reflection can produce. Many women, who, on entering, seemed a disgrace to humanity, come out correct, sober, reflecting, and reformed, with their little children strong and healthy, past all dan-

ger of death, and able to struggle with all the difficulties of existence which poverty entails.

The management of this hospital is conducted by a Board, of which the large majority consists of persons differing from us in religion; but there has never been the slightest complaint of any interference with the conscientious convictions of any patient. On the contrary, the physicians are most punctilious in seeing dangerous cases provided with the proper clergyman. And is it not a delightful thing to see Christians forgetting for a moment their differences of religious opinion, and working together hand and heart on the broad and ennobling basis of fraternal love! working purely and disinterestedly for the good of their fellow-creatures and the glory of their common God. This unhappy country, alas! has been too long victimised to the hydra-headed monster of what may be called religious uncharitableness (the very words express the anomaly); it is time that men and women, made by the same God, redeemed by the same Saviour, destined for the same glory, should emulate the noble conduct of those to whose care this hospital is confided, and that, like them, in the face of the poorest sufferer, we all should see only the image of Him who has said, "As often as you have done it to one of these, my least brethren, you have done it unto me."

Such is the spirit you are this day called on to evince. I shall not add another word—I know whom I address—a people on whose hearts the words of heaven's messenger fall like heaven's dews on the plains of earth, stimulating, ripening, and fructifying into deeds of charity, deeds fruitful unto eternal life. "Give, then, alms of your substance, and turn not away your face from any poor person, and so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord will not be turned from you."—Amen.

SERMON

ON THE FEAST OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL.*

“I will sing praise to thee, O Lord, in the sight of the angels : I will worship towards thy holy temple, and I will give glory to thy name.”—PSALM cxxxvii., v. 2.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—I come here to-day, at the request of your zealous pastor, to address you on two subjects, in which, I doubt not, you take a lively interest, namely—first, the veneration which you specially owe to the great Archangel St. Michael, to whom this sacred edifice is dedicated, and whose festival has just been celebrated by the Universal Church ; and, secondly, the respect and reverence which you are bound to manifest towards the sacred edifice itself, inasmuch as it is the holy temple of the living God. In a word, I come to awaken in your souls, as far as it is possible for me to do, sentiments akin to those which animated the Royal Psalmist, when he exclaimed, in the words which I have quoted for you, “I will sing praise to thee, O Lord, in the sight of the angels : I will worship towards thy holy temple, and I will give glory to thy name.”

The Angels of God, my Brethren, exercise a very large and most important influence over the eternal destinies of men. Bright, pure, and God-loving, they, by their very nature, take an earnest interest in the conduct of beings by whom the glory of their Creator may be enhanced through all the ages of eternity. From the inspired testimony of the Sacred Scriptures we discover that the angels have been employed in almost all the important events that have ever taken place in the history of God’s chosen people ; and by the same sacred authority we are assured that their ministrations will continue to be exer-

* Preached in the Church of Blackrock, Cork, October 1, 1865.

cised in man's behalf, even until the world will be no more. Their very name is derived from their relation to mankind, for angel signifies a messenger; and it has been the noblest prerogative of the angelic body, that they have been frequently sent as messengers between God and man; so intimate is their connexion with us, that to every human being born into the world is allotted by God an angel, to be his guardian and protector, from the cradle to the grave. To every child of Adam this condescension of the Deity is not only a magnificent honour, but an inestimable blessing. It is an honour to the child of a sinful, fallen race to have ever at his side, by night and day, on land or sea, a bright, glorious, and immortal being, commissioned by God Himself to act the part of a guardian, companion, and friend! And it is a blessing, which no words can adequately describe, for man, weak as he is, and exposed to a thousand dangers, to be constantly supported and defended by an ever-vigilant and irresistibly powerful protector. "There shall no evil come to thee," says the Psalmist, "nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling, for he hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk, and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon." Those bright beings were created by God long before the existence of the world. Ideas of their beauty and glory are but poorly conveyed to our minds by the brightness of the sun and brilliance of the stars; for the sun and stars are material beings, bright and beautiful to the dull of earth; but it is only when the gross clouds, that now obscure our vision, are removed, and the eyes of our souls shall contemplate the glories of the celestial world, that we will be enabled to see and to admire the spiritual brightness and beauty of the angels, and be transported by the sight into ecstasies of joy and love. Sinless and spotless, radiant with the charms of grace, glowing with love before the throne of God, they chanted His praises in tones of heavenly sweetness, and felt no happiness like that of loving and adoring their Omnipotent Creator. How long they remained in this state of blissful enjoyment, it is not permitted to us to know; but, alas! we do know that

one of them, the brightest—Lucifer—the morning star in that celestial firmament, conceived a thought of pride—a desire to rebel against the God that made him—to sit on the throne of the Eternal! We know that these feelings of pride and rebellion found an echo in the hearts of many of his fellow-angels, and that, in punishment of their sin, they were hurled, in the twinkling of an eye, from the highest heights in heaven to the lowest abyss of hell, which was thus created by God for the eternal chastisement of His sinful creatures. Terrible reflection for sinful man! “Behold,” cries Job, “they that serve him are not steadfast, and in his angels he found wickedness; how much more shall they that dwell in houses of clay, who have an earthly foundation, be consumed as with the moth!” (iv. 18).

The angels whom God found faithful to His love were confirmed by Him in grace, and secured in the possession of eternal glory. He then created this world for the use and benefit of another class of creatures, endowed with souls of a nature similar to the angels, but with earthly bodies, in which those souls should dwell during the period of their earthly existence. He thus created man, prone to sin, but able to resist it, susceptible of grace, and destined for the eternal enjoyment of the Author of Grace in the kingdom of His glory. But the fallen Lucifer, and his wicked companions, envied the glory of God, and the happy destiny of man. They determined to wage war against both. Alas! we know by the sad experience of nearly 6000 years, how woefully successful those wicked spirits have been in the prosecution of their infernal designs. By tempting Eve to sin, they have been the means of introducing into the world every evil and misfortune that ever beset the human race; they have filled the earth with sufferings and woes, which, alas! for many, are but a bitter prelude to the eternal woes and sufferings of the future. But the good God had compassion on man, and while He sent a Redeemer, in the person of His only Son (a boon refused to the angels), who opened to man the gates of the heaven which his sins had closed against him, He arrayed the angelic host of heaven to defeat the machinations of the diabolic host of hell. Hence, as I have already observed, we find, from the records of Holy Writ, that the angels have interfered in

all the important crises in which the fate of God's chosen people was involved. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, those great patriarchs of old, were frequently favoured with apparitions of those holy spirits. Lot was delivered by angels from the burning of Sodom; by an angel the Israelites were conducted into the land of promise; the three children were rescued by them from the blazing furnace into which they were cast by an infidel king. Daniel was rescued by angels from the lions' den, where he was fed by Habacuc, whom angels brought by the hair of the head to his noisome prison. Peter's chains were rent asunder by an angel; by an angel the prison-door of the Apostles was opened. An angel announced the incarnation of Christ to the world; an angel presided at His birth in Bethlehem; conducted His flight into Egypt; fortified Him against the temptation of the devil in the desert, and consoled Him amidst the lonely horrors of Gethsemane. And on the last tremendous day, when the Son of Man will come to judge the world in the clouds of heaven, with great power and majesty, He will come surrounded by His angels, who will manifest on that occasion by their joy and sorrow the various sympathies awakened in their souls by the happy or unhappy destinies of the children of men.

Such, my Brethren, is the vast and important influence exercised by the angels of heaven in the concerns of mankind; an interest begun at the foundation of the world, and which shall not cease until the eternal gates are closed for ever on the judgment day. But, amongst the angels there are degrees of dignity, and highest amongst them in honour and beauty, and glory, stands the Archangel, St. Michael. His name, when interpreted, means, "Who is like to God," because these words express the profound humility of the angel who, as we are told in the Sacred Scriptures, led the faithful angels against the rebellious Lucifer, the angel of pride, and was made by God the instrument of his destruction. "And there was a great battle in heaven," says St. John in the Apocalypse, "Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought, and his angels—and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven, and that great dragon was cast out; that old serpent who is called the devil, and Satan, who seduceth the whole world,

and he was cast out unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him" (xii. 7). The opposition of St. Michael to the devil never ceases. We gather from the Epistle of St. Jude, that after the death of Moses, the devil wished to prevent his body from being buried, in order that the people might be induced to offer to it idolatrous worship, considering their great love and admiration for their departed leader, but St. Michael interposed and checked the designs of the devil. As Satan is the sworn enemy of God's Church, St. Michael is her recognized guardian and protector against his diabolic assaults. And, to manifest his concern for the welfare of the Church, the great Archangel has at various times appeared to holy men in the Church of God, as the other angels appeared to the patriarchs in the Old Law. In obedience to his desire, expressed on various of those apparitions, churches have been built to his honour at various places, and at various times, and in those churches many miracles have been wrought by his intercession with God. Hearing of these magnificent evidences of Michael's power, it must be a subject of consolation for you to remember that, from time immemorial, your parish has been placed under the patronage and protection of the great Archangel, and that he exercises in a special manner in your behalf the exalted powers and privileges with which he has been endowed by his Omnipotent Creator. This church in which we are now assembled has also enjoyed since its foundation the patronage of St. Michael, who, although unseen by you, yet hears your prayers and wafts them like sweet incense before the throne of God. To God Himself the church is consecrated; for the promotion solely of His honour and glory; for prayer and sacrifice to Him alone: but it is placed under the protection of St. Michael, who is thus employed as an instrument by God for the promotion of the eternal welfare of those who pour their prayers to Him before that altar. Thus the Saint is likewise honoured, and by honouring the Saints we honour their Creator, for, as the Psalmist says, "God is admirable in his saints;" and in the wondrous dispensation by which God has appointed the angels for our guardians and protectors, He has established a powerful claim, not only to our admiration, but to our warmest gratitude; for, whereas we are all sinners, and thus hostile to Him, instead of

casting us off as we deserve, He carries His forgiveness and His love so far as to appoint as our guardians through life those bright spirits who are deemed not unworthy to minister before His own eternal throne. Isaiah, the Prophet, represents Sion as addressing the Almighty, and saying, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me;" and the Lord answers, "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And, if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold I have graven thee in my hands." Yes, God remembers man with more than the love of a mother, and that love is well shown in the mission of the angels who watch over us through all the dangers of life, who guide our wandering footsteps, diverting them from the chasms and pitfalls that momentarily threaten us with destruction, and finally bring us, with God's grace, to the mansions of glory, where He reigns, and shines, and blesses for ever.

Now, my Brethren, to come to the second portion of our subject, when we find what a lively interest God and His angels and Saints take in the churches erected by man for Divine worship, two things must strike us clearly, and make a deep impression on our minds; namely, first, the sacred and exalted character of the temple of the Lord; and secondly, the great devotion that should characterise those who come to worship the Lord in His temple.

And first, with regard to the sacred character of the temple of God, it must be observed that, although God is everywhere present, and may therefore be worshiped in any part of created nature, He nevertheless has always wished to be specially worshiped in particular places. His presence is not confined to any one particular spot; His immensity fills all space. "The heavens are my throne," saith He, "and the earth my footstool." On the summit of the highest mountain, and in the depths of the deepest valley, God hears the voice of man. "If I ascend into heaven," saith the Psalmist, "thou art there; if I descend into hell, thou art present; if I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." But at His desire particular places have ever been consecrated to His service. Thus amongst the numerous precepts He delivered to Moses to regulate the

conduct of His people, we find Him enjoining on the great lawgiver the necessity of setting aside a particular place for His worship. In the Book of Deuteronomy we read : "Destroy all the places in which the nations that you shall possess worshiped their gods upon high mountains and hills and under every shady tree ; overthrow their altars and break down their statues ; burn their graves with fire, and break their idols in pieces ; destroy their names out of those places ; you shall not do so to the Lord your God, but you shall come to the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there and dwell in it, and you shall offer in that place your holocaust and victims" (xii. 2, &c.). The temple of the Lord is His house ; He has called it so Himself. "My house is a house of prayer." "Behold the tabernacle of God with men." Even of the temple of Jerusalem it was said that "the majesty of the Lord filled the temple of the Lord." But in the New Law how justly is the temple called the house of the Lord, when He dwells there not in figure, or type, or cloud, but with His whole being—His body, His blood, His soul, His divinity. On that altar, within that tabernacle, concealed beneath shadows perceptible to the sense, dwells unseen the same God that resides in the highest heavens, the Eternal, the Omnipotent, the splendour of the Saints, the King of angels, the terror of the demons, the Saviour of mankind, Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Eternal Father. He there sits like a king upon his throne ; but oh ! with mildness and sweetness rare to royalty, to receive the petitions of the most wretched of His subjects, to heal the bruised heart, to dry the tears of the weeper, to elicit the tears of the hard-hearted, to quicken with more entrancing rapture the soul of those who revel in the sweetness of His love, to announce pardon to the sinner, freedom to the captive, salvation to the sinking, hope to the despairing, life, and love, and joy to all !

Oh ! then, what should be the respect and devotion of the Christian worshiper as he enters the holy temple of the Lord, the house of God, the palace of the Eternal King ! When our attention is directed, at home or in a foreign land, to the decaying remnant of a building where once some great king, a hero or philanthropist lived—to the crumbling walls of a mansion where dwelt, in far off

times, some man of mighty genius, some intellectual giant of the past—we stand silent and awe-struck, as if the spirit of the great dead still hovered around the spot, and sanctified the ruin. Nay, even if we enter the mansion of some noble or royal person of the present day, we feel, the moment we cross the threshold, that our demeanour must be modest, thoughtful, respectful. We speak in a subdued tone of voice—we walk quietly and noiselessly through the various apartments—we feel as if the nobility of the owner pervaded the whole house, and tacitly insisted on recollection and reserve. What, then, should be our feelings of awe and reverence when we enter, not the palace of a worldly monarch, but the palace of the King of kings and Lord of lords—not the edifice where dwelt the hero, the philanthropist, the genius, but the house where dwells the power of the Omnipotent, the love of the All-good—incarnate Wisdom itself!—where is truly and really present the only Son of the living God—the same by whom the world was made—by whose power it is conserved—on whose will hang the lives and destinies of men—by whom the world shall be one day destroyed, and by whose voice the sentence, whether for weal or woe, shall be pronounced upon every child of the human race! Yes, before the conclusion of the ceremony at which you now assist, that that great Lord will descend from the highest heavens, surrounded by myriads of angels, and present Himself before us upon that altar. Oh! well may we exclaim with the patriarch Jacob, under circumstances somewhat similar, “How terrible is this place! this is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven: the Lord is here, and I knew it not!” Whenever, therefore, you enter this temple, remember that the Lord is here, and show by a recollection of spirit, by a gravity of deportment, by an earnestness of devotion, that you know that you are in the presence of your God—the God who made you—the God who will judge you. If you keep this impression firmly engraven on your minds, your prayers will be more sincere, more heartfelt; they will be worthy of being taken by angels before the throne of God, and while enhancing His glory, they will bring a blessing to your souls. Emulate the piety of David when he exclaimed, “I will sing praise to thee, O Lord, in the sight of the angels; I will adore towards thy holy temple, and I will give glory to thy name.”

But, my Brethren, that I may narrow the question to the precise object of this discourse, let me ask you, of what description should be a temple truly worthy of the Lord? Alas! such a temple it is impossible for weak man to raise; for, as the great king Solomon said, when about to raise to the glory of his Maker the magnificent temple of Jerusalem, "Who shall be able to build him a worthy house? If heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, who am I that I should be able to build him a house?" No, if all that the wealth, and power, and genius of all mankind together could execute were embodied in a temple raised to the glory of God, that temple would still fall infinitely short of worthiness for Him, the Eternal, the Infinite! But God does not demand impossibilities; He only requires what is within the scope of human power. The temple raised by a people for the worship of their God should be grand or beautiful in proportion to their resources—no more. It should be neat, well-ordered, decent, and elegant, in proportion to the status of those who build it. It should be supplied with all the appliances of worship; nothing should be wanting whereby the ceremonies of the Church may be performed with all correctness and precision, and, when occasion requires, with that splendour which piety exacts for the proper worship of the Lord.

Would it not be a reproach to any man to have it said that his own house was distinguished for elegance and taste, and that nothing was wanting in it that could promote the happiness of the owner, or of those who accept his hospitality, while the parish church, wherein he performed his weekly devotions, was left to ruin and neglect, and stood, despite the untiring exertions of a zealous pastor, an unsightly object in the public gaze; proclaiming to the world the lukewarmness, the indifference, let us rather say, the infidelity of the so-called Christians, whose duty it was to render it a temple worthy in some measure of the living God? My Brethren, this reproach cannot be uttered of you; your church is worthy of your generosity and your zeal; it is an eloquent exponent of the piety which has ever flourished amongst you. I have reminded you of the great love which God has manifested towards you, in the appointment of His angels as your guardians; in permitting those glorious beings to patronize your

churches, and convey your prayers from thence to Him. I have shown you the sacred characters of the temple of the Lord, and the profound respect and reverence which Christians are bound to manifest towards them. I am sure I have not spoken in vain. Remember that, whatever you do to-day, in compliance with my demand, you do for the house of God, for the sanctuary of grace, for a holy temple, which is the type, the image of the temple of God's eternal glory. Act, therefore, I pray you, so that, celebrating here the praises of God in the sight of His angels, you may deserve to sing His praises for ever in their sight, face to face, that, beautifying His material temple here, you may be worthy to bless and praise Him for ever, in the temple of His glory hereafter. Amen.

SERMON

ON DEATH.

“It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment.”
HEB. ix. 27.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—As you may surmise, from my use of these words, I am about to address you on a subject with which you are all perfectly familiar; which presents itself every day before your eyes, in every shape and form, and with all the circumstances of which you are better acquainted than with any other subject whatsoever; for it is, of all subjects that relate to man, by far the most important, inasmuch as in it are wrapped up all his interests, both temporal and eternal; it is the pivot on which all man's happiness turns, the point of the balance, in one scale of which is man's eternal bliss, and in the other man's eternal woe—that subject is Death! Perhaps in the whole history of the human mind, nothing is more singular than the apathy with which man regards this tremendous subject. To win wealth, honour, or power, for a few fleeting years, man will undertake any trouble, any labour, any privation; to escape sickness, poverty, pain, or hunger, he will employ all the energies of mind and body; but to win an eternity of happiness, or to escape the eternity of misery, which depends upon Death, few men exercise a thought, very few strain a muscle. Of all subjects, Death is the most awful; the one most calculated to excite horror in the mind; the ordeal from which our nature shrinks with ineffable terror; and yet, in general, how little one thinks on it as one ought; we fly from the thought of it, as if it were no concern of ours; we shut our eyes, that the horrid phantom may not frighten us; we arouse ourselves into a false courage, and say that, perhaps, it is not so terrible after all. We postpone the consideration of it

for a more suitable time, as if time were our own! Sometimes we catch a view of the monster in all his grimness, in the dead of night, when gloomy thoughts do most predominate; perhaps when we have waked out of some horrid dream, in which the mind, freed from control, caught some glimpses of the terrible reality, and then we tremble; our conscience is shocked; we see the hideousness of sin: but with that fatal apathy with which the subject is regarded, we strive to banish the salutary thoughts of amendment, with which God would inspire us, and long for the first rays of daylight, which may disperse the gloom, and restore us to the false ease of thoughtless indifference. What wonder is it, when Death comes at last, it comes when he is least looked for; and that the soul which would not see its danger is victimised and lost for ever? Let us, my Brethren, to-day manifest a little more interest in our eternal welfare than Christians are generally wont to do; let us open our eyes; let us contemplate our danger in all its details; let us see the precise position in which we stand with regard to this tremendous subject; that, if our lives be such as to inspire us with confidence, we may so persevere to the end; and that if, on the other hand, we have been heretofore indifferent and apathetic, we may be encouraged so to live that we may not be afraid to die.

There are three points in the consideration of Death, which appear to me to embrace the whole subject, and to which, therefore, I shall invite your most earnest attention, and these are: first, the certainty of our dying; secondly, the uncertainty of the time, place, manner, and other circumstances of Death; and thirdly, the consequences which Death entails.

Nothing is more certain than Death; it is appointed for all men once to die; nothing can save us from this dreadful doom, the sentence is general; it was pronounced on every son of Adam; millions upon millions of men have existed from the beginning of creation, and all have died and passed away like shadows. Neither wealth, nor power, nor wisdom, has been able to save any man from this general sentence; the good and the bad have died alike; no amount of virtue has been able to make such favour with God as to avert the fatal decree. The king and the peasant, the philosopher and the clown, have all died indiscriminately. They who have lived longest have died

at last. Adam lived 930 years, and he died ; the whole sum of the history, and existence of the patriarchs of the law is contained in that pithy sentence, "they lived and died." Every descendant of Adam, every sharer of Adam's sin, must meet Adam's fate ; "Of every tree of paradise," says God to him, "thou shalt eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in what day soever thou shalt eat thereof thou shalt die the death. In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread until thou returnest to the earth from which thou wert taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." "The wages of sin is death," says St. Paul. Therefore, as sure as we are sinners, so surely shall we die. Every day, every hour, we advance nearer and nearer to our end ; to the day when we shall never see the night, or to the night when we shall never see the morning. Our best and dearest friends have died ; the brave, the young, the beautiful, the good, the witty, and the humorous, have all passed away before our eyes. We have seen the strong man struck down, and the strong right arm wither. We have seen the soul-speaking eye look glassy, and fixed, and expressionless. We have seen the cheek which was the seat of happy smiles and playful laughter grow stiff, and fall clammy and cold, cold as marble, in death. Where is the table from which we do not miss the loving father, the tender mother, the beautiful child, or the gay friend that we loved as a brother ? We must seek for them in the churchyard, and even there we shall not find them ; others have taken their place ; they glow to-day with health and beauty ; they cheer us to-day by their lively sallies of wit and humour : alas ! to-morrow, or if not to-morrow, very, very soon their hour too shall come, and we must open once more the fountain of our tears, and learn, when it shall be perhaps too late, the sad lesson that we too must soon, and perhaps speedily, follow them. Death, therefore, is most certain ; nothing can avert it. Oh ! would that we would look this truth well in the face, and then, how different should be our lives !

But the fact that we shall all die is not more certain than that the circumstances accompanying death are uncertain. Shall we die in the morning or in the evening, at noon day or midnight ; shall Death come in the spring time or in the gay bright summer ? When shall we die ? Shall it be after ten years' time, or twenty ? Shall it be

next year, next month, next week, to-morrow, or to-day? Oh! think of it; is any one of us sure that he shall live to-day, until the setting of the sun? Believe me there is at this moment, throughout the world, many a man who rejoices in his youth, and strength, and manly beauty, who little dreams of dying, or preparing for death, and yet who, before the sun goes down, shall die; he shall lose his life by accident, or by the visitation of God; his body shall lie cold and rigid in the midst of his weeping and horrified friends, while his soul shall have passed before his Maker, and received that mysterious sentence which shall consign him to eternal bliss, or eternal misery! At this moment the green grass is beginning to shoot over many a fresh grave, wherein lie the remains of the youth or maiden who but a week ago was the pride of a family, and the centre of all their brightest hopes and most ardent affections! When shall we die? Shall it be in the moment when pleasure is sweetest, and life most endearing? or shall it be in the hour of melancholy and affliction, when Death itself cannot add another pang to our broken hearts? No one knows, but God alone. How shall we die? Shall it be after a long and painful illness, with full warning and full preparation; or shall we be struck down suddenly without time enough to say, God, have mercy on us? Shall we die by sickness, or by accident? we know not. Where shall we die? In the city, or in the country? In our own or in a foreign land? Shall we die on the stormy sea, and shall our bones lie in its fathomless depths forgotten? Shall our friends stand around our bedside and soothe our last pangs? or shall we die away from every face which might impart sweetness even to that bitter hour? No one can tell; all these things are buried in mystery. We only know that we shall die, but when, or where, or how we shall die is known only to the Omnipotent God. Have you ever seen any one die? Oh! what a fearful spectacle! There lies the victim on his death-bed; let us suppose him an unrepentant sinner, for the death-bed has no terrors for the just. He is young, and has brought on his own premature decay by excessive dissipation. His cheeks are sunken, hollow, and pale; his eyes stare wildly and vacantly about; Death he fears, he knows is coming, and when he looks back over the dark history of his short life he begins to feel like Cain, that his sins are too great to

be forgiven; the minister of God stands by and seeks to console him; the holy man extols the mercies of God, and paints the picture of Magdalen, and the repentant thief; his friends try every expedient to bring his mind into a proper train of thought; all is vain, his pains are too violent, and his mind is too agonised to think of any time except the present. He falls at length into a stupor, it is the immediate precursor of Death; his breathing is slow and hard; his chest heaves at every respiration, slower and more slowly, and then at length the last sigh, and life is fled; he lies a cold, white lump of clay before his friends, while his soul has passed before his Maker, and received, alas! the fatal sentence of eternal condemnation!

Then remember the fatal consequences of Death—the consequences to soul and body; the body is one of the most loathsome objects in the world, so much so that it is painful to look at it, to think of it, to describe it; but it is better to be harsh to our sensibilities for once than to have them grated on for ever because we would not think on a bitter truth. So loathsome is the body of the dead man, that his friends are the first to remove it with all haste from the house, lest the horrible stench emanating from it may infect the air; and then, whither is that body removed? It is wrapped in a shroud—nailed up in a coffin and buried deep in the cold, damp earth. The worms soon find their prey; and that form, that once excited the admiration of men, and drew forth many an extravagant compliment to its grace and beauty, seems after one week in the grave the most hideous, disgusting, abominable spectacle which it is possible for the eyes to contemplate, or even the imagination to conceive. And then the consequences to the immortal soul—"It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment"—there is the great secret which makes death so awful—the judgment. The moment after the soul has been separated from the body it stands before God, and must render to Him an account of all the thoughts, words and actions of which it was the cause or occasion since the dawn of reason. It is the thought of this frightful judgment that makes death so terrible to the dying sinner. He turns himself every way to seek comfort and consolation, and can find none: all the oaths, blasphemies, im-

purities and other criminal excesses of which he was guilty during life then stare him in the face, and fill his soul with the horrors of despair. When looking back into his past life, he can find no good action performed purely for God, which might at all counterbalance the immense load of guilt in the other scale. He thinks of all the grace he has overlooked, the talents he has neglected, the time he has lost, the sacraments he has despised—he lived for the world, and the world now abandons him. Such a dismal scene of woe is presented to his mind by the contemplation of the terrors of approaching judgment, that he might exclaim, with the words of the Psalmist: “The sorrows of death have compassed me, and the perils of hell have found me.” He must leave behind him all that his heart held dear—his wealth, his lands, his houses, the smiles of friends and children dear to him as life, his fond and faithful wife. He would give all his possessions for another year, another day of life. No, Death cannot be propitiated by entreaties, nor bought by gold. The moment has come—he has ceased to breathe for ever. Oh, if he had lived differently how different would be his end! If he had approached the sacraments at proper times, and received the grace of God; if he had devoted as much energy and zeal to the service of his Maker as he did to the pursuit of temporal happiness, he might exclaim in his dying hour, with the royal Prophet: “Though I should walk in the midst of the shadows of death, I will fear no evil, for thou, O Lord, art with me.”

Now, my Brethren, from all these considerations it is clear that for us Death is the most important of all subjects, and that it is the only subject worthy of engaging all our interest and attention. On it depends our happiness or misery for all eternity. If we die well, we shall be glorified with God for ever—if we die ill, we shall be burning, in hell’s fire, as long as God shall be God, for all the days of eternity. That we must die at some time is most certain: “It is appointed for all men once to die.” Therefore we ought most assuredly prepare for that last hour, on which so much depends. The hour of Death is most uncertain: it therefore follows that we should not only prepare for Death, but that we should be always pre-

pared ; for we know not "the day nor the hour, and the Son of Man will come at the hour when we least expect him."

If a man could die twice, he would certainly die well the second time, for the horrible memory of hell's torments would make him endure anything rather than run the risk of suffering them again. But, alas ! we can only die once. "It is appointed for all men once to die." What is there that you ever did once and did well ? Did you ever succeed in doing well at the first attempt ? You now can walk ; but when you first tried the operation you toppled over and fell to the ground ; you can now write well, but your first attempts were wretched failings ; you have seen men plough for many a day, and scarcely ever deviate from a straight line, but when they first handled the plough it went crooked and did not turn up the earth properly—and why ? they had tried it only once : so in like manner is there not great danger that when we die once we may not die well ? Oh ! what a terrible thing to think of ; but although we can make the trial but once, we can succeed by the grace of God. There is nothing which we may not do, when aided by His grace. But how can a man expect to die well who never thinks of the subject at all—who shuns the thought of it as if it were Death itself ? The arrows of Death are falling around us every day—our fellow-men drop down beside us, before us, and on every side, and yet we fancy that we shall be the last to be struck. We follow the pleasures and vanities of this world as the butterfly follows the flowers of the field ; but, oh ! it is only when we are dying we shall see the empty phantom we were pursuing ; for as the world will then be past, we shall then see in its true colours the nothingness of everything on which we set our hearts. Ah ! how despicable will then appear to us the honours and distinctions of this world, where the worm shall show no more respect to the king than to the beggar ! How contemptible shall then appear to us the wealth and riches of this world, for which we may have toiled and laboured, and probably hastened the approach of our last hour, when a coffin and a shroud shall be our only possession ! Oh ! then how clearly we shall see the wickedness of sin, and the folly of not having lived for God, for Him alone ! How beautiful

virtue shall appear: how delightful the ways of God! Then we shall feel the force of the words of the wise man, who has said, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." When will you be prepared to die? Are you ready now? If Jesus Christ stood on the altar this moment, and said that some one of us should immediately die, which of us would not tremble? And justly. And it is very certain that before long some one of us here assembled will die. Of the congregation which was present in this church twelve months ago, have not some passed before their Maker, and received their eternal doom? It was their turn yesterday, it may be ours to-day. Oh! then be always prepared. Remember the only object of your living is that you should die well; we came into the world for no other end; it is the great lesson we must all study, "Think of thy last end and thou shalt never sin." When you rise in the morning, think that you may not live till night, and when night comes imagine you may never see the morning.

Oh! God grant us the grace to live well, that so we may learn to die well. Grant us the grace to keep Thy commandments and to observe Thy law, that our souls may "die the death of the just, our end be like to theirs."

LECTURES.

LECTURES.

LECTURE

ON THE NATIONAL MUSIC OF IRELAND.¹

IN Ireland, from time immemorial, music and poetry have been so much cultivated conjointly by the same class of men, and not, as in other countries, each by a different order of votaries, that, as far as Ireland is concerned, the history of the one cannot well be dissociated from the history of the other. The bards of the most ancient times, and indeed the bards of times comparatively modern, not only reached the highest excellence in the performance of instrumental music, but their own genius supplied them with words and ideas, and facility of musical composition, requisite for attaining thorough perfection in the cultivation of the sister art. It is, therefore, impossible for him who professes to trace the history of Irish music not to interweave with his theme the history of Irish poetry also. In the performance of this task, the historian or lecturer must expose himself to the ridicule of the unlearned sceptic, and to the incredulity of many of his own un-Irish fellow-countrymen when he claims for the poetry and music of his native land an antiquity scarcely attained by those arts in any region of the universal world. But scepticism and unpatriotism must yield to the adamant sternness of truth; and it is truth to say that the history of Irish poetry and music can be traced back to the earliest dawnings of the history of mankind. Music is as old as the world, and the world was yet young when Ireland

¹ Delivered before the Cork Literary and Scientific Society, December 12, 1868.

was colonized by wanderers from Oriental climes, where poetry and music appear to have been coeval with the very formation of society. Music is inherent in the very nature of man—it is the language specially adapted for expressing the joyous affections of an innocent mind. As the whispering of forest leaves, the rippling of the mountain stream, and the roar of the angry storm, are the homagiving music of inanimate creation, so vocal melody is the prescribed music in which nature dictates to man to sound the praises of his God. No tribe or nation has been ever known that was not susceptible of the influence of music ; and the more primitive the state of man, the more prevalent appears to have been its cultivation. Hence the idea of pastoral life is always associated with the idea of musical tastes. According to the fourth chapter of Genesis, Jubal, the seventh descendant of Adam, with whom he was contemporary, was “the father of them that play upon the harp and the organs,” that is, of all stringed and wind or pulsatile instruments ; and, appropriately enough, we find in the same passage that he was the brother of Jabel, who was “the father of such as dwell in tents and of herdsmen.” Thus we find, at one of the earliest periods of human history, that the nomad life was associated in one family with the cultivation of the art of music—a circumstance which is illustrated in heathen mythology by the pipes of the sylvan Pan and the lyre of the pastoral Apollo. Jubal was also a contemporary of Noah, and doubtless transmitted through the saved of the ark the secrets of his art to his postdiluvian descendants. The branches of the human family were soon after separated from the parent stock, and migrating from the plain of Senaar, brought with them their customs and traditions to every quarter of the globe on which they settled. All truthful history assures us that the earliest colonists of Ireland came from the East—that land where the genial warmth of the climate, the surpassing beauty of Nature, and the vivacious temperament of the people, together with that simplicity and impressibility characteristic of the infancy of society, made almost every man a poet. From that pure and generous source the poetry and music of Ireland have flown, and, after the lapse of ages, to this day close affinity may be discerned between the strains of several Oriental nations and the strains of our native land.

These similarities have been discovered in Persia and India. Marsden, in his history of Sumatra, says that "the Sumatran tunes much resemble to his ear those of the native Irish, having usually, like them, a flat third." Modern travellers, or residents in India, will tell you that there is a marvellous resemblance between the Hindoo melodies and those of Ireland and Scotland. The same may be said of the melodies of the Siamese. From these Eastern sources our national melodies have been derived; as, on the other hand, in this nineteenth century, may be discovered in the music of the West Indians an infusion of Irish melody, which can be traced to the period when Cromwell and his myrmidons transported thousands of our countrymen to those islands, where they were sold as slaves, and, in those far off climes, left behind them vestiges of melancholy music in which, like the children of Sion, they mourned their captivity and denounced the cruelty of their conquerors.

The cultivation of music, indeed, appears associated with the history of the Irish race from the very beginning; while in other nations, the date of poetic invention, and musical excellence, forms an era clear, well-defined, and prominent. The earliest Anglo-Saxon poet, for example, of whom historians tell, was Cædmon, a monk of Whitby, who died in the year of our Lord, 680, while amongst the train of Milesian invaders who had taken possession of Ireland more than 2000 years before, fragments of poems written by those ancient children of song have drifted down the stream of time, and bear in their language and sentiment the veritable ring of the days of old. The *disjecta membra* of Amergin, the son of Milesius, are as well authenticated to-day as the melodies of Moore, and of the two are certainly more Irish.

There is evidence to show that the earliest representative of an Irish harp known to antiquarians is a fac-simile of that which was used by the ancient Egyptians, a circumstance of considerable moment in tracing the history of Irish music to the very remotest antiquity. In the ancient constitution of this kingdom there were five orders in the State, viz.:—The royal, the aristocratic, the priestly, the poetical, and the mechanical; and when the representatives of those five orders met at their *feis*, or great national assemblies at Tara, so great was the honour paid the repre-

sentatives of music and song, that they occupied the highest place next to Royalty itself, and surpassed in the splendour of their attire the proudest nobles that basked in the halo of the throne. Indeed, the very name of the place where those great national assemblies were held had its origin in the music-loving passion of the people; for, as we are assured by authentic historical records, *T'emur*, which is the Celtic name of Tara, means when interpreted the "Wall of Music." Thirteen hundred years before the coming of Christ, to quote the Book of Ballymote, "the people deemed each other's voices sweeter than the warblings of a melodious harp; such peace and concord reigned amongst them, that no music could delight them more than the sound of each other's voice. Temur (Tara) was so called from its celebrity for melody above the palaces of the world, *tea* signifying melody, or sweet music, and *mur* a wall." Alas! both wall and music have disappeared for ever, and—

"The harp that once thro' Tara's halls
The soul of music shed
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that soul were dead."

But, indeed, even here is a wild poetic fiction; for not only is there no harp to hang on the walls, but there is no wall on which to hang a harp, since, according to the calmer statement of our national bard in his History of Ireland, even in the sixth century "No trace of the original palace still remained, while the hill itself had become a desert overgrown with grass and weeds." (Vol. ii. p. 132.) In Ireland the bards of old were divided into three classes or orders, viz.:—the Filea, the Seanachie, and the Brehon. They were, as their names imply, the historians, the antiquarians, and the legislators of the country. Some enlightened and soothed kings and chiefs, some roused their valour, while others emblazoned in immortal verse their heroic achievements in the field. The Irish princes, like the Arabians, kept a numerous band of bards, musicians, and story-tellers in their train. The privileges and duties of the bardic body are defined in a poem written by one of themselves, the celebrated Dubhthach, Archfilea or chief bard of Leogaire, King of Ireland. "The learned poets and antiquaries," he says, "are free from tribute as long

as they follow their own profession. They shall be ready to direct the kings and nobles according to the laws, preserve the records of the nation, and the genealogies of families, and instruct youth in the arts and sciences known in the kingdom." On the consecration of every new king it was usual for the royal bards to stand before the throne in scarlet robes, and sing the inauguration ode; and this custom lasted as long as there were kings in Ireland. From the earliest dawn of Irish history the bardic body were a national institution; they charmed the ears of their princes and people, they enriched the literature of their native land; and doubtless had Ireland been able to preserve her nationality, her language and literature, like the other nations of Europe, those great and gifted men of old, who, even to us their fellow-countrymen, are either unknown or unregarded for their unpronounceable names and unspeakable language, would rank with the proudest sons of song whose names illumine the historical pages of more fortunate nations.

So important an element in the government and adornment of the kingdom was the bardic institution, that seminaries and colleges were established for the education of those who aspired to the dignity of bardship. The date of the first erection of these schools is ascribed to the reign of Ollamh Fodhla, or the learned professor, King of Ireland, who flourished some three centuries before the Christian era. In these seminaries the Druids instilled into the minds of the bards the rudiments of history, oratory, and laws, through the medium of poetry; these instructions being conveyed in verses set to music, which was always esteemed the most polite kind of learning among them. The highest degree in these colleges was that of Ollamh, or Professor; and so eminent a place did these men hold in the estimation of kings and people, that they were admitted to the highest offices in the hierarchy of Druidism.

Several kings of Ireland, so far from considering it a condescension, regarded it rather as a high honour to be enrolled amongst the bards; and, on the other hand, in the eleventh century we find an instance of the chief bard of the time being raised during an interregnum to the dignity of Regent in Ireland. In a word, there was no honour of which the bards were not deemed worthy. They

held vast landed possessions. For instance, the barony of Carberry, a territory of immense extent in the county of Cork, was a present made to a bard of that name by one of the kings of Munster, in admiration of his excellent professional capabilities. In banquets and public festivals the highest place was assigned to them, after royalty itself; and when surnames came to be invented, the distinguishing article "the" was prefixed to their names, and the Mac Egans of Connaught and the O'Dalys of Desmond rivalled in the splendour of nomenclature The O'Brien, Prince of Desmond, and The O'Donoghue, Chieftain of the glens.

So sacred were their persons held that an *eric*, or compensation levied for killing a bard, was next in amount to that levied for killing a king: and from the Annals of the Four Masters we gather that when Gregory O'Maelcomy, one of the greatest Ollamhs of the day, was even by accident killed, 126 cows were given as an *eric* or compensation for the loss sustained by his death. And justly were they thus esteemed, if only for their high intellectual attainments, at a period when they outstripped with giant strides the civilisation of the age in which they lived. "The bards of Ireland," says M'Pherson, "have displayed a genius worthy of any age or nation." But they were as much distinguished for the profession of their hospitality, as they were for the depth and variety of their learned lore. They kept open homes where all visitors were welcome, but most of all, the votaries of science; and we can well picture to ourselves on those occasions of high festival, "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," that shed an *eclat* round the bardic board, when the severity of philosophical disputation was varied by the vocal melody of educated minstrels, and the clamorous voices of controversy were hushed by the dulcet music of the harp.

Such was the bardic order, and such the high esteem in which music and song were held in the olden days of Ireland, while yet the Druids performed their mystic rites; while yet the annual fires illumining every hill-top proclaimed that Bel was the god of the Celt.

But a new era arrived, the herald of the brightest days that ever shone on this fated land. Patrick, the Christian Apostle, set his foot upon the shores, and, in the blaze of the Gospel light, the Bel fires were extinguished for ever.

The haughty Leogaire and all his court were converted to the faith, conspicuous amongst whom was Dubhthach, already alluded to, the Archfilea or Prime Bard of Ireland. Nor were the poetic flights of that bardic genius impeded by the teachings of Christianity. On the contrary, the sublimating influence of a Divine religion gave new wings to the poet's fancy, and opened for him a new and boundless firmament of thought, where he might soar in a serener atmosphere, in the purest sunlight of heaven. "The strains which he had sung," says the biographer of St. Patrick, "in honour of the false divinities, he changed into a more useful chant, and language of a purer flow, in celebration of the praise of the Almighty."

The eloquence of Patrick met with no resistance. The minds of a people naturally poetic freely embraced a religion which was poetry itself, and the bards were amongst the first Christian proselytes. This is the more remarkable, as they had from the earliest times monopolised the teaching prerogative in the State, and would, therefore, be supposed reluctantly to have yielded to the novel doctrines of the Christian Apostle. But the wonders of grace surpass the imaginings of men. Amongst the numerous bards who dedicated their talents at this period to the sacred cause of religion, the most distinguished are Feich, the Bishop of Sletty, a see in the present county of Meath, whose poem, published for the first time by the learned Colgan, is in the hands of every Irish scholar; Amergin, author of a celebrated work, well known and highly useful to Irish antiquarians, entitled the "*Dinn Seanchat*;" the famous Columbkille, and others of equal note. Most of the poems of these celebrated men afford internal evidence that their construction is founded on the traditional rhythmical songs of the Pagan bards. "Their note and their jingle are national; they follow a long established practice, well known to the bards of former times." So says Hardiman, in his work on Irish Minstrelsy.

Sacred music was at this period cultivated with great success in Ireland. Ambrosian chant was the first used in our churches. St. Patrick, who was instructed in that system at Tours, introduced it into the Emerald Isle within fifty years after its first institution at Milan; while, at the hands of the Irish priesthood, the Gregorian chant was cultivated, not only in their native land, but in every

country on the Continent of Europe. From the "*Acta Sanctorum*" of the Bollandists we learn that, in the year 650, St. Gertrude, having procured books from Rome, invited over to her abbey at Nivelles two Irishmen, St. Foillanus and St. Ultanus, brothers of the more celebrated St. Fursey, to instruct her convent in psalmody; while from sources equally authentic we discover that St. Helias or Hely, an Irish monk, was the first that introduced the Roman chant at Cologne. At home, in the old land, according to the testimony of Cambrensis, bishops and abbots, and other holy men, were wont to carry harps about with them, and soothe their minds in the hour of trouble and care with the soft tones of sacred music. That harps of this description were in common use among Irish ecclesiastics from the very introduction of Christianity into the country, is confirmed by the written lives of the most distinguished Irish Saints, as well as by the fact that such harps are represented on the knees of ecclesiastics, on several of our ancient stone crosses of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries; and also appear at some of our ancient shrines and reliquaries of later date. This was at that period of our history to which, after centuries of persecution and degradation, we point with honest pride, and remembering which, we cherish an inextinguishable hope that such blissful days may yet return to Ireland—the period when she was recognised all over the civilized world as the "*Insula Sanctorum*"—when sacred song ascended from the early dawn of morning to the descending shades of night, from the thousand monastic choirs on green hill side, on sloping lawn, and verdant valley; on the ocean shore and by the margin of sunbright rivers; from the sacred cloisters of Benchoir, that giant university of old, whose very name implies choral magnificence; from the abbey of St. Mongrel, near Limerick, "where," saith the historian, "there were together five hundred monks well skilled in psalmody;" from the towering heights of the Lismorensian school on the picturesque banks of the Blackwater; from the far-famed monastic halls of Armagh; and let us add, from the long-demolished choirs of the no less distinguished abbey of St. Finn Barr. This was the time when the fame of Ireland travelled on the wings of the wind through every known region of the world, and votaries of learning flocked for instruction to her shores;

when, with that high-minded generosity peculiar to genius, she bore abroad some share of the learning that abounded at home, and her children became the teachers and professors of bēnighted Europe. At home and abroad, music, sacred and profane, was cultivated and taught by Irishmen; and the green island in the bosom of the Atlantic, in whose diadem sanctity had become the brightest jewel, now claimed additional admiration from mankind by the less honourable, but not less distinguishing, characteristic of the "Land of Song."

Yes, Ireland the sanctuary of religion, the nursery of poetry, became the congenial dwelling-place of music, which, when chased from other lands by the hostile genius of war, sought refuge and found it in the bosom of Erin. In no other country were the sisters poetry and music so hospitably welcomed, in no land were their votaries so honoured, so enriched. The traveller could not wander far through any part of the country without encountering the bard and the harper; and merry must have been those good old times, when the hospitable doors of prince, and chieftain, and lord, lay invitingly open to the pilgrims of learning from every shore of Europe, and the rude but generous banquet was enlivened by the stirring strains of the lyre, the tympan, and the lute. Our "National Bard," as he is called, of modern times, makes graceful allusion to those festive customs of the olden days, in one of his most popular songs:—

"When the light of my song is o'er,
Oh! take my harp to your ancient hall;
Hang it up at that friendly door
Where weary travellers love to call:
Then, if some bard who roams forsaken
Revives its soft notes in passing along,
Oh! let one thought of its master awaken
Your warmest smile for the child of song."

But the very splendour of bardic pomp well-nigh occasioned the utter extinction of the bardic order; and this occurred as follows. The bards, as we have seen, were the most honoured men in the kingdom. They enjoyed in abundance wealth and lands, and the most splendid dignities which it was in the power of the monarch to bestow. Masters of a sublime and soothing art, they won the admiration and love of the learned, while for their knowledge of the mysteries of nature, and of the hidden harmony of

the universe they were almost adored by the ignorant and vulgar. With all these varied and splendid tributes to their genius and skill, they remained still human, and their humanity betrayed them into pride and self-conceit. "Through pride the angels fell." How can men hope to rise by it? The bards grew every day more haughty and arrogant. They aspired to honours still higher than those which had been so freely and so ungrudgingly lavished upon them; they demanded the distinction of wearing the golden "fibula" that bound the royal robe on the breasts of kings for many generations; the nobility they despised, the vulgar they ignored. Their numbers swelled so prodigiously, and the whole order became so wealthy, that the mechanical arts were neglected, and agricultural pursuits were almost entirely abandoned. The monarch Hugh, apprehensive for the stability of his throne and the welfare of the nation, convened, in the year 580, a general council of the whole kingdom, to consider the best means for correcting this gigantic grievance. He there resolved that the whole bardic order should be abolished. The monarch had little soul for music, or perhaps had got a satiety of it; but at the intervention of St. Columba, who had been specially summoned from Scotland to attend the council, it was finally arranged that each provincial prince and each lord of a cantred should be allowed one registered bard or Ollamh, whom he was to endow with a settled hereditary fortune. That this bard should be sworn to employ his talents solely in the promotion of religion, in promoting the glory of the nation, in defending female virtue, in sounding the valour of heroes, and celebrating the munificence of his patron. The monarch Hugh also established seminaries for the education of bards, of which the prince bard of the kingdom, the monarch's own Ollamh, should be president; whose duty it was, moreover, to appoint the Ollamhs for each provincial prince or lord. Thus clipped of its wings, but yet purified of much that was earthly, the bardic order pursued its course until the period of the Danish invasion.

The arduous and long-continued efforts of the nation to repel the invaders from her shores retarded the progress of music, for the "piping-time of peace" gave way to the coarse clangor of war, and the soft tones of the lute were exchanged for the clash of battle-axe and spear. Yet the

Muse had still a home in Ireland, and the hoary monarch, who fell in his tent beneath the Danish falchion at Clontarf was as celebrated for his skill in the music of the lyre as he was distinguished for his valiant achievements in the field. National records point to few favoured sons of the Muse during this dark age of tyranny and bloodshed; but yet a few names do stand forward "to show that still she lived." "These are not imaginary persons," says Hardiman, "like many called into fabulous existence by the zeal of some neighbouring nations in asserting claims to early civilization and literature, but men long celebrated in the authentic annals of their country, whose works still extant survive the succeeding convulsions of centuries. Those works do not possess any of the wild barbarous fervour of the Scandinavian scalds, nor the effeminate softness of the professors of the 'gay science,' the troubadours, and lady bards of this period. The simplicity of expression, and dignity of thought, which characterise the Greek and Roman writers of the purest period pervade the productions of our bards, and at the present day they are particularly valuable for the important aids they furnish towards elucidating the ancient state of this early peopled and interesting island." ("Irish Minstrelsy," vol. i., p. 16.) At this period Flann M'Lonan, Ard-Ollamh, and Chief Bard of all Ireland, was distinguished by the flattering epithet of the "Virgil of Erin;" and we are assured that the genius of music was hereditary in this laureate, inasmuch as his mother was known to all men as, by excellence, "the poetic." In this age, too, we trace the distinguished name of Cormac, King of Munster, author of the celebrated "Psalter of Cashel," whose versatile genius may be conceived from the fact that he was at the same time prelate, king, historian, and poet. We may also add, that he must have had a highly cultivated architectural taste, as the magnificent ruins of the edifice erected during his reign on the far-famed rock of Cashel excite to this day the wonder and admiration of architectural connoisseurs. Chroniclers also love to dwell on the fact that, at this time, Alfred the Great was sent by his father for instruction to Ireland, and confided to the charge of a pious matron of high reputation for Christian knowledge, named Modwenna. This I mention because Alfred was an accomplished master of the harp, for which

he was most probably indebted to his Hibernian tutors, from whom he may have also learned the cunning device which history ascribes to him of going in the disguise of a harper amongst the soldiers of the hostile camp, and, while charming their ears with his melody, learning the secrets of their situation, strength, and intentions, and availing himself of the knowledge thus acquired, for the purpose of defeating their projects of attack. During this dark age the harp was introduced from Ireland into Wales by Gruffyth ap Conan, Prince of North Wales, who brought with him at the same time a large number of cunning musicians, well skilled in the music of their own land. Into Scotland it had been long before introduced by the itinerant bards of either country, and had been employed, it is supposed, in Divine worship simultaneously by the monks of Bangor and Iona. And here I may incidentally observe, on the authority of Bunting, the well-known compiler of the "*Ancient Music of Ireland*," that, until a comparatively recent period, the harp was the usual accompaniment of the mass in our rural districts. We are assured by Dante that long before his time—and he lived in the thirteenth century—the harp was brought into Italy from Ireland, "where," says the poet, "it had been in use for many and many ages." Thus, during a period of the history of Europe which appears to have been the saddest and gloomiest in her annals—a period generally designated a night of ignorance and barbarism—though Ireland partook of the general obscuration of the times, she was yet sleepless in the cultivation of poetry and music, as she was active in the repulsion of her invaders, and unwearying in the reparation of her demolished sanctuaries of learning and religion.

A short interval of peace ensued between the expulsion of the Northmen, and the invasion of the Anglo-Saxons; for the Fine Arts it was a period of revival marvellously rapid. On the arrival of Strongbow, the Irish bards and harpers had attained a success unparalleled in the history of the country. For proof of this fact we need not appeal to any prejudiced national pen; but we will find it attested by the gall-ink records of the worthy priest-historian, Giraldus Cambrensis. "This people, however," he says, "deserve to be praised for their successful cultivation of instrumental music, in which their skill is be-

yond comparison superior to that of any nation we have seen. For their modulation is not drawling or morose, like our instrumental music in Britain; but the strains, while they are lively and rapid, are also sweet and delightful. It is astonishing how the proportionate time of the music is preserved, notwithstanding such impetuous rapidity of the fingers, and how, without violating a single rule of art, in running through shakes and slurs, and variously intertwined organizing or counterpoint, with so sweet a rapidity, so unequal an equality of time, so apparently discordant concord of sounds, the melody is harmonized and rendered perfect." He goes on to admire the simultaneous sounding of different chords, the attention to cadences, the soft swelling and diminution of the notes, and thrilling delight produced by the tingling of the slender strings sportively playing under the deep tones of the bass. This testimony of Cambrensis is all the more valuable as he had travelled all Europe, and was able to compare the musical excellences of all civilised nations. He studied for some years in Paris, visited Rome three times, and took his route, at least once, through the Low Countries and Germany. He adds, moreover, that Scotland and Wales endeavoured to perfect themselves in the musical schools of Ireland, and some were beginning to think that Scotland had already surpassed her instructress.

Such was the enchanting sweetness of Irish music, that the conquerors of the country paused in their work of bloodshed and enslavement to be delighted with the strains of the captive land. Fascinated by the unwonted spell, they frequently sacrificed their lives to the charms of such soft oblivion; for the minstrels, in whom the love of their native land was by far the most inspiring passion, for the most part employed their art in the sweet work of revenge, besirening their tyrants into a fatal incautiousness, and immolating them to the outraged genius of national freedom. And yet, to the praise of victors and vanquished, be it stated that such was the music of the Celt, and such the appreciation of the Saxon, that an Irish minstrel became an indispensable appendage of baronial magnificence, while every wandering child of song found a cordial welcome in the English camp, and a *cead mille failthe* in every Anglo-Irish castle. But soon, when the chains had been well-nigh riveted, it was found

that many a link was becoming loosed by the insinuating charm of music and song, and that the sympathy of the conquerors was becoming strangely awakened in favour of the conquered. It may have been to some extent by those soft arts of music that the Saxons became in many places "more Irish than the Irish themselves." Howbeit, the severity of the law had to be called into operation to prevent the free mingling of the Irish harpers with the English settlers. Proclamation followed proclamation preventing it. The famous statute of Kilkenny, passed in the year 1367, made it penal to give any entertainment to Irish minstrels, of whom six classes were specified, and forbade them to enter the English Pale, under the penalty of forfeiting their instruments and suffering imprisonment. Those whom they failed to seduce they endeavoured to corrupt. One of them, whose name I will not even do him the honour of mentioning, obtained a license to dwell within the precincts of the Pale, for that "he not alone was faithful to the King, but was also the cause of inflicting many evils on the Irish enemy!" Oh! for a tongue to curse the slave! In the reign of Henry VI. (we must hope the gentle monarch knew nothing about it) the bards, continuing still to exercise their unwished for influence over the colonists of the Pale, the Marshal of Ireland received orders to imprison the harpers, and was further empowered to confiscate to his own use their gold and silver, their horses and harness, as well as their instruments of minstrelsy. Need it be added that, in the sanguinary reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, those laws against the Irish bards, so far from being relaxed, were written in the reddest ink of their blood-stained statute-books, and that, as the adage tells us, an Irishman is ever found ready to turn the spit on which his fellow-countryman is about to be roasted, the Virgin Queen found amongst her officers in this country many ready ministers of her vengeful enactments? The Lord Barrymore of the day was one of those who courted the royal favour by accepting commissions under the great seal, not only to destroy the instruments of the proscribed musicians, but also *to hang the harpers*. But the policy of persecution was frustrated by the enthusiasm it only tended to evoke. "The charms of song," says Moore, "were ennobled with the glories of martyrdom, and the acts against minstrels

in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth were as successful, I doubt not, in making my countrymen musicians as the penal laws have been in keeping them Catholics." The bards survived and flourished, and the strains of national music, though blended with the sadness of a persecuted race, lost nothing of their enchanting sweetness. At this very period the accomplished Sir Philip Sidney bears honourable testimony to the fact that, "in Ireland the poets were held in devout reverence," while that cruel hater of the Irish, the author of the "Faery Queen," forgetful of the sympathy that should exist between the children of genius, while complimenting the bards on "the exquisite poetry of their songs," denounces them as employing their melodious arts to the "gracing of wickedness and vice," while the same acts "with good usage might serve to adorn and beautify virtue." The "wickedness and vice" of the bards, which hurt the sensitive conscience of the gentle poet, was the untiring exercise of their genius to foster and keep alive in the breasts of the people the remembrance of ancient glory, and unforgetfulness of ancient wrong: such for example were the "wickedness and vice" of the Bard O'Gnive, who formed one of the attendant train of Shane O'Neil, Prince of Ulster, as he passed through the streets of London, on his way to the palace of Elizabeth. "The Londoners," we are told by Camden, "marvelled much" at the rare spectacle that passed before their eyes. Much more would they have marvelled had they been able to guess that the rough chieftain who headed the procession, O'Neil himself, the descendant of Con of the Hundred Battles, looked down with scorn upon the upstart dynasty of the Tudors, and that the attendant O'Gnive, the poet of the Ulster Prince, was Prime Bard of all Ireland, and that by the charms of his verse and the magic of his lyre, like Tyrtæus of old, he enkindled in the breasts of his subjugated fellow-countrymen a fire that urged them on to many a bloody rencontre with the enemies of their country.

But the period was fast approaching when the spirit of bardom was to be extinguished in Ireland for ever, for though, like religion, poetry and music may for a while survive the rage of persecution, yet, unlike her, they must ultimately perish before it. He who must handle the

sword has little taste for the warblings of the lute ; he who is crushed and starving little heeds the dulcet melody of song. The tyranny of Cromwell and the wars of William decimated the gentry and nobility of the land, and left few patrons for the children of the Muse. The minstrel's day was fast passing away.

“ The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime ;
A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp that Kings had loved to hear.”

The voice of the Muse was now seldom and but feebly heard through the land. Its melancholy tones were breathed almost for the last time in the cause of the second James, to whom the country looked with the faint hopes of an expiring nation ; but never was the Muse of Ireland worse employed than in celebrating the praises of him who, in addition to his own craven cowardice, had the meanness to impute the same weakness to those who so freely bled in his cause, and whose valour was never, before or since, impugned even by the bitterest enemies of their country.

The gardeners of song had now passed away and the garden ran wild, yet many a priceless flower bloomed wildly there. The hereditary guardians of those flowers were no more, and strangers came and stole them unblushingly away. Many continental composers of remarkable genius partook of the elegant spoil, and enriched their own productions with the choicest cullings of the Irish Muse. Thus Irish melody, like a fair bird of passage chased by the harsh winds of persecution from its native soil, sought refuge in the more congenial climes of the south, and taught the imitative warblers of Germany and France to blend the banished music of the west with their own enchanting strains.

In the last spasmodic throes of the Irish Muse, she gave birth to Carolan, the last genuine Irish bard, who, as a musical genius, is allowed to rank with the foremost of modern times, and who, though “ no storied urn or animated bust ” points out his final resting-place, has yet, by his own deathless strains, secured for himself an immortal

dwelling in the affectionate memories of his fellow-countrymen.

Nor even yet was the genius of music extinguished in Ireland, though the last of her veritable bards had perished. A faint echo of the melodious past was heard towards the close of the last century, when, in the year 1792, ten rival harpers met to enter into a musical contest on the national instrument at Belfast. These new Pythian games were first conceived by an enlightened and patriotic Irish gentleman living at Copenhagen, a certain Mr. James Dungan, a native of Granard, in the county of Longford. By his zealous and enterprising love of country, as well as by the generous aid of his purse, a previous meeting of harpers had taken place at Granard in the year 1781, when, in presence of a large and distinguished audience assembled at a ball, seven harpers, of whom one was a woman, met to try by competition the respective charms of their harps. Charles Fanning got the first prize, ten guineas, for his performance of the "Coolin," an air which has been always, and most justly, admired by the lovers of Irish music. The third prize was awarded to the woman Rose Mooney for her performance of "Planxty Burke." Five hundred persons were present at the ball.

On the 2nd of March in the ensuing year, Mr. Dungan organized another ball, at which he was himself present, and which was far more numerously attended than the previous one. Only two new harpers could be found to swell the ranks of former competitors, and one of these was a woman. The premiums were adjudged as before; but owing to some private jealousies observable in their distribution, Mr. Dungan was disgusted, and made no further attempt at the revival of our national music. More than one thousand persons were present at this ball. Lord and Lady Longford were among the number. Persons of rank for forty miles all round assembled: and after the stables of the town were filled with horses, those that remained in the streets gave the town the appearance of a great horse fair. A large subscription was made up for the harpers, or rather for such of them as had not received prizes; and so generously was money paid down for the purpose, that the proportions awarded to the unpriized exceeded the shares allotted to those who had been rewarded.

Ten years passed away, and on the 11th of July, 1792, and the two days succeeding, an immense assemblage of persons met at a hall in Belfast to witness "the last scene in this strange, eventful history" of Music in Ireland. Ten harpers only responded to the call. The prize was awarded to Hempson, whose performance must have been very wonderful in his best days, as on this occasion he had reached the enormous age of ninety-seven, and was supposed, for good reason, to be much older. Hempson is the "mon wi' the twa heads" alluded to by Lady Morgan in her "Wild Irish Girl," this *soubriquet* being an allusion to a huge wen on his poll, which gave him the appearance of a man with two heads. He was, since the time of Carolan, by many degrees, the best performer on the harp. Carolan had more genius; he was a composer. Hempson was only a player; but, as a player, was not surpassed even by Carolan himself. His harp, the only one he ever used, was made for him in the year 1707, and he kept it until the day of his death, which occurred one hundred years after. It was called the "Queen of Music," of which he was, doubtless, the king in his day. His style of playing was different from that of his contemporaries, inasmuch as he played with "long crooked nails," as ancient writers describe the harp-players of the early Irish, while the thrilling effect of the small wires tinkling under the deep tones of the bass fully realised the picture of the harpers drawn by Cambrensis, and filled with wonder and delight those who had the good fortune to hear him. To his enchanting strains we are indebted for the finest collection of ancient Irish music ever presented to the public. Mr. Edward Bunting, to whom I have already alluded, was always, as he describes himself, "an enthusiast about everything Irish;" but the harping of Hempson inflamed him with a still more ardent love of his native land, and nerved him to the collecting and publishing hundreds of old Irish airs, which, but for his zeal, and talent, and patriotism, would have been for ever lost to the world. The attempt to preserve Irish airs had been made three times before Bunting essayed it. The first collection was published by Burke Thumoth in 1720; the second by Neil, of Christ Church-yard; the third by Carolan's son, under the patronage of Dean Delany, in 1747. In all these productions the arrangement was adapted to the

flute or violin, rather than a keyed instrument ; so that the tunes were, to a great extent, deprived of their peculiar character, and as they were deficient in arrangement, so they were meagre in extent. But Mr. Bunting's publication may be called the first only genuine collection of Irish harp-music ever published, at least up to the year 1796. That the publication of such a work should have been postponed until the close of the last century may appear ascribable to the apathy of the Irish on the subject of their national music ; but, on a closer examination, the cause will be found to exist elsewhere. It must be attributed to the mixture of races in Ireland, and the spirit of hostility that, up to the passing of Catholic Emancipation, was fostered between them. The Milesian-Irish were debarred from such a publication by the apprehension of the wrath of their rulers, which was visited on every manifestation of national feeling ; and the Anglo-Irish would not undertake it, because it would tend to excite in the breasts of the people that dangerous enthusiasm which is ever aroused in the victims of oppression by the national poetry and music of ancient times. This apparent apathy extended not only to the poetry and music, but also to the general literature of the country. The Four Masters made a bold step in the right direction ; but even their patriotic intentions were frustrated by the civil commotions of 1641. In modern times, Mr. Hardiman preserved from ruin many of our most popular songs, and the Celtic and Ossianic Societies extended their labours to the publication of other works of interest ; but were obliged to desist for want of a sufficiently large reading or appreciative public. Efforts have been made to preserve the ancient melodies of Scotland with some success ; and when Owen Jones, a Welshman of humble rank, though entitled, from his literary heroism, the "*Cambrian Mæcenas*," published, in 1774, his "*Archæology of Wales*"—a work comprising all the discoverable historical and poetical remains of Cymric literature—his work was hailed with the warmest greetings of his countrymen, and sustained by the contributions of a generous and enlightened public. Great praise, therefore, is due to the patriotic Edward Bunting, who has preserved to posterity nearly three hundred Irish airs, almost all of which would have been irretrievably lost but for his untiring

zeal in the cause of his native land. At the contest of harpers at Belfast, the office was assigned to him of writing down the music of the various airs played, for it was manifest to all that, with the demise of those ten harpers, the treasures of Irish music should perish for ever, unless rescued from oblivion by some timely interposition. The notes thus taken he afterwards perfected in private sittings with Hempson and others; and obtained many more by travelling through the country, and conversing with those who had any information to convey. Gathering thus the floating fragments of song, he gradually formed by an atomic process of his own a new creation of Irish music. His anticipations of the decay of Irish harpers, as a class, were sadly realized some years after, for, in the year 1809, only two of the Belfast ten survived; and in a subsequent edition of his work, he states that, at that time, even those two had meanwhile passed away.

Thus, after centuries of fading glory, another gem was snatched from the diadem of Erin—the very voice in which she proclaimed her woes, and appealed to the sympathy of nations, was hushed for ever. Truly,

“We are fallen upon gloomy days,
Star after star decays;
Every bright name that shed
Light o’er the land is fled.”

And yet, the name of him who penned those lines shall not be soon forgotten, nor the light it shed o’er the land he fled. While Irish Music holds a place in the history of the world, or wins the admiration of mankind, the name of Thomas Moore shall be remembered with gratitude and love for his splendid and successful attempts to revive and perpetuate the melodies of Ireland. I shall not here dwell on the point so often raised respecting the melodies of Moore in connexion with the music to which they are set—how far the ancient music has been distorted to meet his words, or how far his words represent that genius of nationality that should beam through the melodies of one’s native land. Nor shall I stop to investigate the grounds of his opinion, at one time broadly expressed, at another time carefully modified, respecting the antiquity of Irish music of a “civilized description.” Suffice it to say, that he has done a great work—a work that reflects glory and

honour on Ireland. He has restored for ever to the memories of mankind the joyous and the melancholy music of Erin's song, long past; the hymns of peace, the marches of war, the pæans of triumph in which our ancestors celebrated the varying fortunes of their times; he has wed immortal words to immortal music—he has photographed to posterity the smiles and tears that blend like the rainbow in the eyes of Erin. Riving asunder the lava-shroud in which the volcanic eruptions of rebellion and tyranny had enveloped her poetry and song, he has brought to light the wonders of a new city of the dead, where the Muse walked long ago with the children of men; and as the morning sun awaked in Egypt the melody of Memnon's fabled lute, so the sunbeams of his genius radiating through the long obscured caverns of buried music, aroused the slumbering harp of Erin, and made it sound as of old to the enchanted ears of men. Truly then did he sing of himself—

“Dear harp of my country, in darkness I found thee,
The cold chain of silence had hung o'er thee long,
When proudly, my own island harp, I unbound thee,
And gave all thy chords to light, freedom, and song.”

But he has done still more by his immortal strains, for they uphold the ancient dignity of our country, and the ancient virtue and valour of her sons, and hold out to the desponding generation of the present day, by their seemingly inspired vaticinations, the consoling hope that the star of oppressed and persecuted Erin, so long obscured, may yet shine out in all its pristine splendour, when those which now shed a dazzling brightness in the firmament of nations shall be defaced and extinguished for ever!

While the bards of Erin flourished, and the national harp music was cultivated, foreign music remained in Ireland disregarded or unknown. It was only in the last century it was introduced into the country, when its own music was in the last stage of existence. Many Italian masters who visited England made the tour of Ireland before their return to the Continent, and some fixed their abode, and found a final and congenial resting-place in the “land of song.” The first of these was Mathew Dubourg, the friend of Handel, who fixed his residence in Dublin in the year 1728. Castruci, the pupil of Corelli, died in the Irish me-

tropolis in 1752. Geminiani, the greatest violinist of his age, and Giordani, a scarcely less-distinguished celebrity, left their bones in Ireland. The great Handel himself, chased from England by an unappreciative public, appealed successfully to Irish admiration. It is to his flight across the Channel on this occasion that Pope alludes, when he addresses the goddess of Dulness, as follows :—

“ Strong in new arms—lo ! giant Handel stands
Like bold Briareus with his hundred bands ;
To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul he comes,
And Jove’s own thunders follow Mars’s drums.
Arrest him, Empress, or you sleep no more.
She heard, and chased him to th’ ‘ Hibernian shore.’ ”

Dunciad, Book IV.

In the year 1741, his “Messiah” was first heard in Dublin, and the applause it received more than compensated for the disregard he had experienced in England. Music now became all the rage. Italian singers were invited over, and the fair dames of Ireland learned to expire at an opera. Concerts were the favourite amusements in the houses of the nobility and gentry, and Musical Societies were formed in all the great towns of the kingdom.

But much as the Irish admired the performances of foreign artists, they did not send forth into the arena of composition any of their own countrymen until the year 1782, when the Earl of Mornington, father of the Duke of Wellington, led the van in this new sphere of national glory ; a new mythology by the way—the Irish Apollo begetting the Irish Mars ! By his own natural talents and studious application he acquired such knowledge of his art that Geminiani declared he could not add to his knowledge ; and he was one of the few on whom the Dublin University conferred the degree of Doctor of Music. He was followed by a numerous host, among whom rank foremost Sir John Stevenson, Phelps, M’Donnell, Moore, Lee, Hefernan, and others who deserve to be specially noticed. Henry Madden, an Irishman of noble family, was at one time chapel-master to the Cathedral of Tours, and subsequently master of the choir at the chapel royal of Versailles, where his music was sung down to the time of the first revolution. Thomas Carter was famous at Naples, Bengal, and in England. Rophino Lacey, born of Irish parents at Bilboa, was regarded as a prodigy of music in

Spain, Holland, France, and England. "The Young Spaniard," as he was called, received presents from Buonaparte and from George the Fourth, while Prince of Wales, as compliments to his rare and wonderful genius. Andrew Ashe, of Lisburn, won by public competition the dignity of "first flute" at Brussels. But the fame of all preceding musicians was eclipsed by that of Michael Kelly, whose musical genius was of the very highest order. He won his laurels in every metropolis of Europe, from Rome to London, and from Paris to Vienna. He was the courted of kings, the adored of audiences, the favourite of the Sovereign Pontiff, at whose hands he received the honour of being permitted to perform in St. Peter's during Holy Week. In times more recent, Balfe preserves the honour of Ireland in the field of music, while many humbler sons of genius constitute a galaxy of undistinguishable but brilliant luminaries in the firmament of national music renown. And all this has taken place while no Englishman has been known to compose a single piece for any foreign audience, and Braham was the only Englishman that appeared on the Continent as a singer and performer with anything like remarkable success.

We have seen that from the earliest dawn of Irish history the harp was the national musical instrument of the country; but it must not be, therefore, supposed that our ancestors were unacquainted with all other instruments of music. In very ancient times the tympan was in use in Ireland. From all the evidences that can be adduced on the subject, it would appear that the tympan was an instrument shaped like a South-Sea islander's guitar, covered with leather, supplied with strings, and played with the fingers. Did we ever dream before that our ancestors were adepts at the banjo? This instrument could not have exercised any great influence on the musical passions of a people amongst whom the noble harp existed, and by whom all its powers of music were so effectually developed. As the Wards are the descendants of the bards, the Shanahans of the Seanachies, the Brehons of the Brehons, the Curtins of the croit-players or harpers, so the Tympanies, a family abounding in Connaught, are the descendants of the Tympanits of old, while all those families taken together are the joint descendants of that poetical, antiquarian, legislative, musical, and philosophical body who

formed an indispensable appendage of an Irish court in the "olden time."

The bag-pipe has been also justly regarded as a national instrument of music in Ireland, from time immemorial. The pipes were played at the head of an army on its way to battle, and by their wild music stimulated the soldiery to deeds of valour and forgetfulness of life. Bunting supplies remarkable evidences of the antiquity of the bag-pipe in Ireland, and shows that it was generally used for martial purposes, and was sometimes also employed in funeral processions, moving by its plaintive tones all those who heard it to pity and tears. The present representative of the bag-pipe in Ireland is not the uproarious instrument of the Scotch Highlanders, but the dulcet, though it must be admitted, the often badly-tuned and worse played instrument to whose music we have many a time at a country wedding seen the "light fantastic toe" whirl in the dance, and from whose melancholy crouching in the hands of some street performer we have rushed out of ear-shot in mercy to our nerves.

That the organ was introduced into Ireland at a very early period appears to be beyond dispute, though it is also certain that the instrument called by that name was altogether different in size and power from the gigantic organs of the present day. It is mentioned in the annals of Ulster that in the year 814, the organs of a place called Cluainacrema were burned, and there is reason to think that these were not the first used in the country. The use of the organ from so early a date would seem to imply that a knowledge of counterpoint, or strict polyphonic composition, was known in Ireland since its introduction, or at least came to be known soon after. But we must not flatter our national vanity by this surmise, as the best antiquarians suppose it has no foundation. The Irish were too impulsive a race to restrain their feelings within the obligations of harmonic rules. Sentiment was the pervading genius of their song; and impassioned sentiment knows no rules of art, or at least bends to them with difficulty and reluctance. As simplicity of dress heightens the effect of female beauty, so the unadornment of Irish melody is its sweetest charm; it is lost and unadmired in the cumbrous apparel of complex harmonization.

And, indeed, to an Irishman what music sounds so sweetly as the simple melodies of his native land? How often at a magnificent concert, got up in one of our cities regardless of expense, where the music was perfect, the performers unequalled, the singers the most celebrated of their day, have we observed the apathy, or at least the perfectly controllable enthusiasm of the audience, as each measure of music and song was presented for admiration! But when, amidst the profusion of foreign wonders of harmony, some solitary voice, like that of the last feathered minstrel of day, stole forth and caroled a lay of our native land, have we not observed with feelings perfectly indescribable the sudden hushing of every breath, the riveted gaze of every eye, the rapt attention of every ear, the almost audible throbbing of every heart. The whole audience seemed melted almost to tears, and at the expiration of the singer's last note have we not marked what a peal of applause burst wildly forth, what earnest, fervid enthusiasm burned in every breast, and what a vigorous inexorable encore forced the singer back upon the stage, and elicited a repetition of the air "so bewitchingly simple," yet so marvellously magical in its effect! On such an occasion enthusiasm heightens to frenzy when the harper appears upon the stage, and calls forth the thrilling wonders of his lyre. Then the memory of the Irishman wanders back to the days of old, and the spirit of Ossian overshadows him, for he feels that "Such were the words of the bards in the days of song, when the king heard the music of harps, the tales of other times. The chiefs gathered from all their hills, and heard the lovely sound. They praised the voice of Cona, the first among a thousand bards; but the sons of song are gone to rest. My voice remains like a blast that roars lonely on a sea-surrounded rock after the winds are laid; the dark moss whistles there; the mariner sees the waving trees." If such be the effect of an Irish melody on an Irishman's heart at home, what must it be when in some place of distant exile "he hears the wild songs of his dear native plains?" For no exile ever sighs more for his native land, or loves her more intensely than the "exile of Erin" does his. Distance softens down the less amiable traits with which bigotry and misrule have stained her character; her virtues and misfortunes alone are remembered, and the exiled

child thinks only with that love peculiar to the impulsive nature of Erin's sons of the sad, weeping motherland he has left behind, perhaps for ever.

The melodies of Ireland breathe much of woe—they teem with spells awakening the bitterest recollections; but it must be remembered that the Muse of Erin is not always sad, but often exults with hope and joy, often mingling in the self-same song her mirth and sorrow, her lights and shades of feeling. Her melodies typify her character, and are the most eloquent commentaries on the vicissitudes of her history. They paint the blending of her smiles and tears—they tell the progress of her glory, and her gradual evanescence. “The tone of defiance,” says Moore, “succeeded by the languor of despondency—a burst of turbulence dying away into softness—the sorrows of one moment lost in the levity of the next; and all that romantic mixture of mirth and sadness which is naturally produced by the efforts of a lively temperament to shake off or forget the wrongs that lie upon it.” Such are the features of our history and character, which we find strongly and faithfully reflected in our music; and there are many airs which, I think, it is difficult to listen to without recalling some period or event to which their expression seems peculiarly applicable. Sometimes, when the strain is open and spirited, yet shaded here and there by a mournful recollection, we can fancy that we behold the brave allies of Montrose marching to the royal cause, notwithstanding all the perfidy of Charles and his ministers, and remembering just enough of past sufferings to enhance the generosity of their present sacrifice. The plaintive melodies of Carolan take us back to the times in which he lived, when our poor countrymen were driven to worship their God in caves, or to quit for ever the land of their birth (like the bird which abandons the nest which human touch has violated); and in many a song do we hear the last farewell of the exile, mingling regret for the ties he leaves at home with sanguine expectations of the honours that await him abroad—such honours as were won on the field of Fontenoy, where the valour of Irish Catholics turned the fortune of the day in favour of the French, and extorted from George II. the memorable exclamation, “Cursed be the laws that deprived me of such subjects!”

Charming as are the strains of his national songs to the ears of the Irishman, their effect is grievously marred by being sung in a foreign tongue, like the hard, unmelodious English. This we can never understand, for while the English has become to us a mother tongue, our own appears harsh, unmusical, nay to many, barbarous. And yet the Celtic is admitted by all philologists to be one of the oldest, the most prolific, the most musical, the most expressive languages ever spoken by man. In the expression of pathos it is unsurpassed. "If you plead for your life, plead in Irish," is a well-known adage. There was a time when it was the language of poet and peasant alike—when it was the instrument of vigorous eloquence in the mouths of high-born dames. The Anglo-Saxon invaders took to it in preference to their own tongue. But its day is past. By the destruction of the Irish nobility the national language became entrusted to the keeping of the poor and unlearned: the tongue that flourished in the castle fell into decadence and barbarism in the cottage, and it would be no more fair to judge of its ancient sweetness by the samples that fall from the lips of a modern mountaineer, than it would be to judge of the English by the jargon of Yorkshire. The contempt with which Irishmen have ever been regarded by their conquerors was visited to a great extent on the language of the subjugated country. "And yet what is there, it may be asked, in the Irish language to make worse men or worse subjects of those who speak it than the Welsh or the Highlanders, whose native dialects are cultivated and encouraged?" Among the foremost to answer in the negative would have been King George IV. The warmest reception that monarch ever received from his numerous subjects was expressed by an Irish "*Cead-mile-faelthe*," and amongst the best bulwarks of his throne were the bayonets of Ireland pushed through the hearts of his enemies under the broad-voweled Celtic cry of "*Fag-a-ballagh!*"

The Celtic language is peculiarly adapted to musical composition. Indeed, all candid critics admit that fact. In lyrical composition it is considered superior even to the Italian. This was the decided opinion of Michael Kelly, who knew both languages well, and was too ardent a lover of music to let national prejudice bias his judgment. Irish

worded music has been admired wherever its melting strains have been heard. Handel was loud in its praise, and Handel was a good judge of music. But, for us Irishmen, it is enough to know that amongst our fellow-countrymen who know the language well, it is spoken of in terms of rapturous enthusiasm, as the noblest vehicle of thought, and the most faithful interpreter of every human passion. Poetic in its very prose, it is more than poetry when wedded to song. We have marked in our rural peregrinations the deep emotions excited through the thronged chapel on a Sunday, when the priest addressed the people in their native tongue! We have seen the religious awe awakened by the description of the enormity of sin, or the terrors of judgment—the sad sigh of pity evoked by some picture of human misery—the fervent, unanimous burst of assent to a prayer for a friend departed. At evening, by the merry fireside, we have heard the lay of some boyish unresisting minstrel, or coy pressed damsel swelling in melodious volume, or dwindling to a vocal thread, calling forth many a cordial “bravo,” arousing in turn every varying passion of the soul. The performance is generally poor, but there is a music in the words which compensates for the deficiencies of the singer; and there is a poetry in the tale of national suffering, and the foredawning of national hope, that warms upon the heart like returning sunbeams upon Arctic snows.

To revive the national language appears to be now impossible—to perpetuate national music is an easy task. The tongue can soon unlearn its native language, while a melody echoes through generations in the ears of men. There never was a more musical nation in the world than Ireland. In joy or in sorrow she was still the “Land of Song.” The bards are gone, it is true, but the minstrels are more numerous now than ever they were. Music is included in the programme of all Irish education, and forms one of the most charming, as it is, doubtless, one of the most innocent of all our social amusements. Had we been less poetical, less fanciful, we might have been also a happier people; but we are in the hands of an all-wise and beneficent Power; but let us hope for better things—not rashly seize them “ere the hour be ripe.” The melancholy tones of Irish music may yet be changed into the exultant chords of jubilee. The world is chang-

ing every day, and why should not she, who is now abased, yet raise her head as of old, and attract by the magic of her beauty the pilgrims of science and religion to do homage once more at her feet? In such an era of general national revival, the Muse of Ireland, too, may resume her lost niche in the temple of our household gods, and the harp—no longer the voiceless emblem of vanished glory—become the resuscitated instrument of perpetual musical renown.

LECTURE

ON JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN.¹

I HAVE chosen for the subject of this Lecture the life and character of John Philpot Curran, one of the purest patriots, and most eloquent orators that Ireland, nay the world, has ever produced. And why do we lecture on the lives of great men? In the first place, in order that we may excite in the breasts of our hearers those feelings of admiration which human greatness merits; for there is a tendency in our nature to admire all that is truly great and noble; and, though our voices may not pierce the silent caverns of the dead, we cannot help paying, even to departed genius and worth, the well deserved tribute of our praise. Again, by studying the lives and the actions of the truly great, we may learn to emulate their virtues or achievements, and thus not only do good for ourselves, but set a model, which others in their turn may copy, according to that of your poet:—

“Lives of great men all remind us
We should make our lives sublime;
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.”

It would be quite possible for me to propose for your consideration the lives of many greater men than John Philpot Curran; men whose splendour of character did not, like his, radiate from only a few points, such as his unselfish patriotism, his marvellous eloquence, his wit and humour; but men whose whole souls burning with a Divine fire, of which the fabled flame of Prometheus was but a poetic reflection, illumined the world by the lustre of their virtues, and enkindled a congenial warmth in the breasts of man-

¹ Delivered in New York, February, 1871.

kind, by the fervour of their zeal. Thus, I could have selected for my panegyric the life of that greatest philanthropist the world ever saw, the illustrious Vincent de Paul, by the magic of whose memory we are assembled here to-night. But characters like these are too sacred, too God-like, to be paraded outside the consecrated walls of His temple whose servants they were ; and although the imitation of their sublime virtues is commendable, with a view to man's eternal welfare, we must remember that man has many duties to discharge in the world which are not sacred, but yet important ; there are many purely secular virtues and excellences, of which he should prove himself master, that he may combat successfully with the difficulties of life, and attain that portion of merely temporal happiness which is not denied to good men even upon this earth. Consequently, as I am addressing you, not in my professional, but in my secular character—since I speak to you as man to his fellow-men—I select for your admiration, and, as far as possible, for your imitation, the life of John Philpot Curran ; not in all its features, for, alas ! in many things he was not a perfect model ; but under that manifold aspect which he wears, of an ardent, strongly-tempted, incorruptible patriot ; a lover of his country and his country's race, without distinction of class or creed ; an able and generous advocate ; an orator of surpassing power ; a wit and humourist the most enjoyable ; a companion the most social, exquisite, and enchanting.

I have thus thought it fit to dwell on the reasons why I place before you the life of a great man ; for I am not of those who seem to think that a lecture may be merely a thing to amuse—to pass an idle hour. I always hold that lectures, and similar addresses, should have in them something of a genuine utility. We live in a hard, practical world—life is real—life is earnest. We must not be content with amusement—with pleasure ; the enjoyment we derive from the lessons of a teacher must be always secondary to the instruction he conveys ; and few lessons are so instructive as the lives of great men, such as Curran was ; for we shall not only be struck by the prominent characteristics of his genius, but while we admire the sterling integrity of the patriot—while we are swayed by the impassioned vehemence of his oratory—while we are charmed by the graces of his wit, we shall

learn the means by which that integrity was cultivated—by which that vehemence was acquired, by which those graces were imparted. Thus we shall feel an impulse to go and do likewise; and if we cannot rival the majesty of Curran, we shall, at least, reach that elevation for the attainment of which an all-wise Providence has befitted us.

John Philpot Curran was born in the year 1750, and died in the year 1817, in the 68th year of his age. His parents were not of high degree; and even if they were, his unprepossessing face and figure would not have betrayed an aristocratic lineage. Physically he could boast only of a pair of black sparkling eyes, lit up with intellectual fire; but all the rest was plain as Nature could have made it. "The only inheritance," he used to say, "that I could boast of from my poor father was, the very scanty one of an unattractive face and person, like his own; and if the world has ever attributed to me something more valuable than face or person, or than earthly wealth, it was that another, and a dearer parent, gave her child a portion from the treasures of her mind." He always spoke with reverence and admiration of his mother—of her wise counsels, and pious example. She lived to see him attain the highest pinnacle of his fame; and in his success, and her reward, we behold a beautiful double picture—the blessing of maternal care, and the triumph of filial affection. And here is at once a striking illustration of what I have just been saying—the means, so constantly visible in the lives of great men, by which their greatness is acquired. Curran's first step to greatness was a sacred respect for the admonitions of a prudent, clever, and virtuous mother. His boyhood was spent at Newmarket, in the county of Cork, his native town, where he was taken into the house of the Rev. Nathaniel Boyce, Rector of the parish, who instructed him in the teachings suitable to his age. He was subsequently educated in the Greek and Latin Classics at a Free School at Midleton, in the same county; and, finally, entered Trinity College, Dublin, with a view to preparing himself for entering the Church as a clergyman. Here he changed his mind with regard to choosing a profession, and concluded to study for the Bar. Having obtained his degree at Trinity College, he passed over to England, and became a student of law in the Society of the Middle

Temple, London. So little did he seem to be adapted by nature to be a great orator, that, what with timidity of disposition, and a natural impediment, he was generally known as "stuttering Jack Curran;" and, on the first trial of his oratorical powers, at a small debating club, formed of his fellow-students, he grew so bashful, that he was not able even to stutter, but sank silent and confounded into his chair. To his companions it seemed clear that his aspirations to fame, as an advocate, were worse than vain; but, a few evenings after, they had reason to change their minds: for, being nettled to the quick by a contemptuous epithet flung at him, in the course of debate, he rose indignant, and burst forth with an impassioned invective against the sneerer, couched in eloquent words, which only untutored nature can supply. This rival debater had referred to Curran as "orator Mum;" but orator Mum observing that his opponent's dress was remarkable for shabbiness and dirt, he assailed him vigorously on this point, and brought down the cheers and plaudits of the house. Curran whispered to a friend near him, "I think my dirty antagonist did not get *clean* off!" "No;" replied his friend, "I never saw a man get such a *dressing*."

Curran was called to the Irish Bar at Michaelmas Term, 1775; and, in his first essay as a lawyer, he evinced the same bashfulness which had characterized him as a student. The first brief he held was in the Court of Chancery; and he read the first sentences of his instructions in so precipitate and inaudible a manner, that the Lord Chancellor called on him to speak up. This so confused Curran, that the brief dropped from his hands, and a brother barrister was obliged to read the necessary passage. Four or five years elapsed before Curran's rare abilities attracted any remarkable attention. It was at the Cork Assizes, and his client was a priest. The circumstances of the case present a good picture of the times. Lord Doneraile had contracted an intimacy with a young woman, whose brother was, no doubt, for good reasons, excommunicated by the parish priest, Father Neale, by the authority of the bishop. The young woman begged of Lord Doneraile to use his influence with the priest for the removal of the ban. His lordship willingly undertook the task. He proceeded in his carriage

to the house of the old priest, whom he found engaged at prayer. He demanded a removal of the excommunication from the brother of his paramour. The priest replied, that he could not remove it without the sanction of the bishop, which, however, he promised to apply for. The indignant nobleman, unaccustomed to refusals, especially from one whom he regarded with supreme contempt, raised his hand, and felled the unoffending clergyman to the earth. The latter brought an action against the nobleman for assault and battery, and the case was regarded with much speculation as to results; for, in the state of the law at the time, such a course on the part of a Catholic priest was considered the height of impudence and folly, especially when the cause was to be tried by a Protestant judge and jury, against a Protestant nobleman of overwhelming influence in the country. It was doubtful whether any barrister would undertake so obnoxious and hopeless a cause. But Curran's soul was made of sterner stuff than men deemed; and so successful was he in combating the prejudices of all his hearers, that he obtained a verdict of thirty guineas damages against the noble defendant. This was a wonderful triumph of eloquence, and inaugurated a new era for the Catholics of Ireland. It afforded one proof that, by some possibility, they might not be trampled on with impunity. One ray of liberty was permitted to illumine an island shrouded for two centuries in the Egyptian darkness of the penal laws. But the undaunted advocate had to give a further proof of his courage. He had indulged in a fierce attack upon Mr. St. Leger, the brother of Lord Doneraile, who had accompanied his noble brother to the priest's house, and aided in the assault. Curran denounced him as a renegade soldier—a drummed out dragoon, who wanted the courage to meet the enemies of his country in battle, but had the heroism to raise his arm against an unoffending minister of religion. Duelling was the fashion of the day, and St. Leger challenged Curran to mortal combat. Speaking in a worldly sense, it would have been ruin for Curran to decline this challenge; for had he declined it, he could never afterwards use his privilege as an advocate of that freedom of speech so essential in courts of law. He would be constantly challenged, and constantly declining; and he would thus incur the dis-

graceful stigmatism of a coward. But, without reasoning thus, impelled rather by native courage, he accepted the challenge, fought a bloodless battle, and acquired the reputation of one as bold in the field as he was fearless at the Bar. The old priest, dying soon after, summoned Curran to his bedside, and imparted to the young and daring advocate his last blessing. It was the first of four duels that Curran had to fight during his public career. After this he became a great favourite with the Catholic people, who began to regard him as *one of themselves*. He was familiarly termed the "counsellor," as O'Connell was subsequently. He knew the Irish language well, and was particularly fond of chatting with the humbler classes of the people, whose wants, and feelings, and virtues, he thoroughly understood, and appreciated. In his boyhood he had loved to attend weddings and wakes, and he was wont to tell how his first ideas of poetry and eloquence were inspired by the rhapsodies of professional mourners (cainors) over the dead. From this frequent intercourse with the poor people of the oppressed and persecuted country, his heart burned with the purest patriotic fire, and in his whole career he was accustomed to vindicate their character in public and private; to descant upon their virtues, and their sufferings; and, although at various periods of his life, he could have accepted place and pension, by sacrificing their interests, he preferred to hold an honourable independence, by which he could show up their calamities to the world, and battle for the restoration of their rights. "At any time," said he, "I might, to a certain degree, as well as others, have tied up my countrymen in bundles, and sold them at the filthy market of corruption, and have raised myself to wealth and station, and remorse—to the envy of the foolish, and the contempt of the wise; but I thought it more becoming to remain below among them—to mourn over, and console them; or, where my duty called upon me, to reprimand and rebuke them when they were acting against themselves." On his return to his native town every vacation, the people all swarmed around him, and offered their congratulations on his daily increasing honours; and to every one he was courteous, kind, and friendly. O'Connor, the roving bard, was never absent on these occasions. The moment the "counsellor's" arrival at the Priory was announced, there was the bard,

and his indefatigable muse, with the periodical tribute of high-sounding, long-winded praise. A silver crown was the poet's reward; but, on some occasions, his demands became so frequent and importunate, that Curran was obliged to signify his displeasure. Instead of money he sent the bard a reply in verse; but, if Curran's verses displayed elegance and taste, the bard's brief response was distinguished for point and force. He said:—

“If you're paid so much coin for all your law,
You'll ne'er be worth a single straw.”

The solicitations of the laureate could no longer be resisted. Curran was only seven years at the Bar when he became a member of the Irish Parliament, which post he filled until the year 1797. It was usual then, as now, for Government to desire that members of the Bar should enter Parliament, where they could be tempted to sacrifice principle, in defending a corrupt system of administration, by the expectation of judicial honours; but all through his parliamentary career, John Philpot Curran, famed for his eloquence, and therefore a most desirably, resisted every temptation that could be offered him—and they were many—and maintained his purity of honour unsullied to the last. No consideration deterred him from asserting the rights of his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen to the political privileges from which they were persistently excluded. He showed up with a dauntless intrepidity the bribery and corruption to which the Government had recourse in the administration of the country. He bore with no enemy; he tolerated no fraud; he spared no menace or warning; he prophesied the still greater calamities in store for his country; but none would believe, until the bloody carnage and diabolical atrocities of '98, and the gold-bought Union of 1800, revealed the sagacity of the statesman, and the far-seeing vision of the prophet.

Much as Curran's eloquence in Parliament is celebrated, it has been always considered as far inferior to his oratorical efforts at the Bar; and in the year 1794 commenced that long array of State trials for political offences, at which he displayed his surpassing forensic abilities. Then as now (it is the old, old story), a society started into existence in Dublin called United Irishmen,

having for its object steadfast opposition to the corrupt Government of the country. Of this society Archibald Hamilton Rowan was secretary. He issued an address to the Irish Volunteers, reminding them of the dangers to which the country was exposed from foreign and domestic enemies, and inviting them to resume their arms for the preservation of the general tranquillity. This publication was prosecuted as a seditious libel, and Mr. Curran was chosen to defend Rowan for his conduct. In his speech on this occasion are some of the loftiest flights of eloquence ever presented to the world; one passage particularly has attained an extraordinary celebrity. A part of the publication of Mr. Rowan claimed universal emancipation for all Irish subjects, no matter of what religious persuasion. Mr. Curran replied on this point:—"Do you think it wise or humane, at this moment, to insult them (the Catholics), by sticking up in a pillory the man who dared to stand forth as their advocate? I put it to your oaths—do you think that a blessing of that kind, that a victory obtained by justice over bigotry and oppression should have a stigma cast upon it, by an ignominious sentence upon men bold and honest enough to propose that measure—to propose the redeeming of religion from the abuses of the Church, the reclaiming of three millions of men from bondage, and giving liberty to all who have a right to demand it?—giving, I say, in the so-much-censured words of this paper—giving universal emancipation? I speak in the spirit of the British law, which makes liberty commensurate with, and inseparable from, British soil; which proclaims, even to the stranger and the sojourner, the moment he sets his foot upon the British earth, that the ground on which he treads is holy, and consecrated by the genius of universal emancipation. No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced—no matter in what complexion, incompatible with freedom, an Indian or an African sun may have burned upon him—no matter in what disastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down—no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of slavery—the first moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain, the altar and the god sink together in the dust; his soul walks abroad in her own majesty; his body swells beyond the measure of his chains, that burst from around

him; and he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled, by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation."

It is needless for me to particularize in detail the several trials in which Curran figured; but there was one, the circumstances of which illustrate very forcibly the state of Ireland at this period. It was the trial of the brothers John and Henry Sheares. These gentlemen, members of the Irish Bar, had been deeply implicated in the abortive rebellion of '98; and when it was crushed, and the Executive had breathing time to look around, it was determined that some of the ringleaders of the movement should be sacrificed upon the scaffold, to deter others from renewing the crime of insurrection. The Sheares Brothers were the first victims selected. Lord Carlton was the judge, a humane and gentle functionary, a warm and devoted friend of Curran, and once the bosom friend of the Sheares' father. The Attorney-General was the infamous Toler, afterwards Lord Norbury, the bloodthirsty and scoffing judge, who could smile, and joke, and pun, while passing sentence of death upon his victim. The trial began in the morning, and it was midnight when Curran rose to address the jury for the defence. Why was not the trial postponed until the following day? Because the sanguinary law, personified by the savage Toler, thirsted for its prey, and would not be gainsayed. We can well imagine the weariness of an advocate's brain, and the languor of his body, after the labours of a whole day in a narrow court-house. He made an appeal for postponement. "After a sitting of sixteen hours," said he, "with only twenty minutes' interval in these times, I should hope it would not be thought an obtrusive request, to hope for a few hours' interval, for repose, or rather for recollection." But no, the minister of the law was inexorable; the trial must go on to the bitter end. Then Curran rose. Behold the scene! the ermined judge upon the bench; in the dock the patriot brothers, standing on the brink of their yawning graves; the faces of the spectators in the galleries and in the body of the court, silent witnesses of the grim tragedy; the struggle between the darkness and the flickering flames of tallow candles; the solemn hour of midnight; the nature of the cause, namely, the wretched condition of Ireland, and the forging of new links in the

chain of persecution; the throbbings of hatred and resentment, and awe and anger, in the silent breasts of the people; and then, the insatiable, ghoul-like Attorney-General, lusting for blood—for the young, fresh, pure blood—of the unhappy brothers, who loved their country “not wisely but too well.” Curran’s appeal for postponement was made in vain. “The counsel for the prisoners,” said Toler, “cannot be more exhausted than those for the prosecution; if they do not choose to speak to the evidence, we shall give up our right to speak, and leave the matter to the court altogether. They have had two speeches already, and leaving them unreplyed to is a great concession.” Then, the wearied but indomitable Curran rose. “Gentlemen of the jury,” said he, “it seems that much has been conceded to us, God help us! I do not know what has been conceded to me—if so insignificant a person may have extorted the remark. Perhaps it is a concession that I am allowed to arise in such a state of mind and body, of collapse and deprivation, as to feel but a little spark of indignation raised by the remark that much has been conceded to the counsel for the prisoners. Almighty and merciful God! who lookest down upon us, what are the times to which we are reserved, when we are told that much has been conceded to prisoners who are put upon their trial at a moment like this, of more darkness and night of the human intellect than a darkness of the natural period of twenty-four hours, that public convenience cannot spare a respite of a few hours to those who are accused for their lives; and that much has been conceded to the advocate, almost exhausted, in the poor remarks which he has endeavoured to make upon it!” Curran went on with his mournful and hopeless duty till the rays of the morning sun dispelled the gloom of night. Between seven and eight o’clock that morning a verdict of guilty was returned; the brothers clasped each other in their arms, the sentence was pronounced, and, after the lapse of only twenty-four hours more, the brothers lay in their coffins, lifeless and bloody trunks: two new names were added to the martyrology of Irish patriots—two new names by which to swear eternal vengeance to British law.

Curran’s frequent and zealous defence of men called in the language of the law “rebellious” gave offence to those in power. They could not understand why felons should

have anything more than the bare form of a trial, and, therefore, they were filled with indignation when finding an advocate, availing himself of such trials, to inveigh against the cruelties of the Government, the perversion of law, the oppression of the people; in fact, encouraging violence and sedition. He was branded as a traitor, because he sought the protection of the law for those who had been accused of violating it; on his way into court he frequently received anonymous letters threatening him with assassination. On one occasion, he had to defend himself in the House of Commons from the charge of having forfeited the character of "a good subject," by the zeal with which he defended his clients. But he remained steadfast and fearless in the conscious pride of having fulfilled his duty. "I am heavily censured," said he, "for having acted for them in the late prosecutions; I feel no shame at such a charge, except that of its being made at such a time as this, that to defend the people should be held up as an imputation upon the King's counsel, when the people are prosecuted by the State. I think every counsel is the property of his fellow-subjects. If, indeed, because I wore his Majesty's gown I had declined my duty, or had done it weakly or treacherously—if I had made that gown a mantle of hypocrisy, and had betrayed my client, or sacrificed him to any personal view—I might, perhaps, have been thought wiser by those who have blamed me, but I should have thought myself the basest villain upon earth."

In Curran's character there was much of the grave and solemn, nay, there was a high tone of religion; and it was no uncommon thing for him, when appealing to a jury on behalf of a client whose life was at stake, to bring before their minds the terrors of the judgment that awaited themselves at the hour of death. And this he did not in a spirit of rhetorical affectation, much less in a spirit of hypocrisy, but as one thoroughly imbued with the awful impressions which he would fain impart to his hearers. Nevertheless, in private, and sometimes in public, he displayed a wit and humour evincing a most vivacious temperament: and as we always more willingly hear what makes us smile rather than be sad, I shall relate for you some instances of Curran's wit, to divert you for a while from the serious contemplation of his character.

Many of you are, no doubt, familiar with the following:

One day, Curran, on entering the court, observed one of the barristers whose wig for some reason excited the attention, and provoked the loud laughter of his fellow-lawyers. "Curran," he exclaimed, "do you see anything ridiculous in this wig?" Curran replied, "No, my dear fellow, nothing but the head."

A hot fool, plunged in distress, was playing at billiards, and having wagered his only guinea on the success of the game, became tremulously anxious on the last stroke of the ball, perceiving the clock giving notice to strike *one*, as he hoped, and fearing some distraction he paused for a moment; another and another succeeded, until the clock went on insensibly to twelve. Thus suspended, his irritation increased, he played and lost, and in his rage, seizing the ball, drove it at the clock with such fury and force that he broke it in pieces; the owner sought compensation and obtained it. This being related in presence of Curran, he observed that the damages should be small, as the *clock struck first*.

Some time after the Union, Curran was walking by the Parliament House with a certain member, a friend of his, who had supported that measure: this gentleman observed, that he never passed that House without the deepest melancholy and regret. "I do not wonder at it," said Curran, "I never knew a man who had committed murder who was not haunted by the ghost of the murdered whenever he came to the spot where the foul deed was done."

Such was the effect of Curran's pleasantry, that, even on ordinary occasions, servants in attending on the table often became suspended, like the bucket in the well, and frequently started as if from a reverie when called upon for ordinary attendance. Sometimes a wine-glass could not be had, or, if asked for, a knife or fork was presented in its place; their faces turned away, you heard nothing but suppressed laughter. He had a favourite negro servant who lived with him many years, and to whom for his great fidelity Curran was very much attached. This poor fellow was observed for a few days before his departure to have been oppressed with gloom and sadness, the cause of which was not directly inquired into. One morning, while in this state, he came anxiously to his master, and with apparent regret and an air of dejection requested to be discharged. Curran told him that he was very much

concerned to lose the services of so very faithful a person, that he had a strong regard for him, &c., and, on inquiring into the reason for leaving him, the black man replied, "It is impossible for me to remain longer with you, massa." "Why, my good fellow, we will see you well taken care of!" "No, massa, I cannot live any longer with you, I am losing my health with you, you make me laugh too much!"

Curran was once engaged on behalf of a tradesman, a citizen of Dublin, who had been ill-treated. Injury was added to insult, he was horsewhipped, beaten down and falsely imprisoned. He complained, through Curran, to a Court of Justice, and a jury listened to his tale of woe and sufferings, which wanted not the colouring of imagination; it was most affectingly told by his counsel; he spared no ornaments to dress out the victim who had already suffered so much. His appeals were deeply affecting, because natural. He gave up to the jury the case of an innocent and oppressed man, in terms which were directed to the heart: the jury and the audience were touched; but the client, who heard all, was so overwhelmed that he burst forth from the silence he had so long maintained, with a sudden exclamation accompanied by tears, "Oh! my lord and gentlemen," said he, "all the counsellor has told you is true, every word of it; but until this moment I never knew that I was so cruelly ill-treated."

If Curran was ever wantonly attacked, he replied in a manner which his adversary would not be likely to forget. When he was quite a young member of the Bar, and therefore more exposed than his maturer brethren to the shafts of his opponents, being one day engaged in a case before Judge Robinson, he chanced to say, "My lord, I have never met the law as laid down by your lordship in any book in my library." "That may be, sir," said the Judge, in an acid, contemptuous tone; "but I suspect that your library is very small." Now, his lordship, who was known to be a bigoted party zealot, was, like others of his day, the author of several anonymous publications remarkable for their despotic principles and violent excesses. The young barrister, roused by the sneer at his circumstances, replied that true it was his library might be small, but he thanked heaven that amongst his books there were none

of the wretched productions of the frantic pamphleteers of the day, "I find it more instructive, my lord, to study good works than to compose bad ones. My books may be few, but the title-pages give me the authors' names: my shelf is not disgraced by any of such rank absurdity that their very authors are ashamed to own them." He was here interrupted by the Judge, who said "Sir, you are forgetting the respect which you owe to the dignity of the judicial character." "Dignity, my lord!" exclaimed Curran, "upon that point I shall cite you a case from a book of some authority, with which, perhaps, you are not unacquainted. A poor Scotchman, upon his arrival in London, thinking himself insulted by a stranger, and imagining that he was the stronger man, resolved to resent the affront, and taking off his coat delivered it to a bystander to hold; but having lost the battle he turned to resume his garment, when he unfortunately discovered that he had lost that also, that the trustee of his habiliments had decamped during the fray. So, my lord, when a person who is invested with the dignity of the judgment seat lays it aside for a moment to enter into a disgraceful personal contest, it is vain when he has been worsted in the encounter, that he seeks to resume it—it is in vain that he seeks to shelter himself behind the authority which he has abandoned." "If you say another word, sir, I'll commit you," cried the Judge. "Then, my lord," said Curran, "it will be the best thing you committed this Term." The Judge did not commit him—but he made an attempt to have Curran deprived of his gown. He received, however, so little encouragement that he deemed it prudent to forsake the attempt.

John Horne Took, a philosopher living in England in Curran's time, once asked an Irish gentleman what was thought of Curran's talents at home, as compared with those of Sheridan. The gentleman replied that, in the opinion of his countrymen, no man living was conceived to profess such brilliancy, richness, and variety as Curran. Horne Took replied, "I know both these gentlemen, and I know them well, both in public and in private: Sheridan is laboured and polished: you always see the marks of the chisel and hammer about him; Curran is a rich and glittering ore, which is raised from the mine without effort, and in the most exuberant profusion." Byron was a great

admirer of John Philpot Curran. Despite the inexhaustible resources of his own fancy, he did not disdain to borrow some of his imagery from the Irish orator. Speaking on a public occasion, on the subject of the Union, Curran had said, "The Irish Protestant was cajoled into the belief that if he concurred in the surrender of his country, he would be placed on the neck of a hostile faction. Wretched dupe! you might as well *persuade the gaoler that he is less a prisoner than the captives he locks up, merely because he carries the key in his pocket.* Byron had copied this idea from Curran, and admitted the fact,

"The nations are
In prison,—but the gaoler, what is he?
No lesser victim to the bolt and bar,
To the poor privilege to turn the key
Upon the captive, freedom! He's as far
From the enjoyment of the earth and air
Who watches o'er the chains, as those who wear."

But this was not all of Byron's estimation of Curran. He wrote of him thus, "I have met Curran at Holland House; he beats everybody, his imagination is beyond human, and his humour (it is difficult to define what is wit) perfect. He has fifty faces, and twice as many voices, when he mimics. I *never* met his equal." Again, "Curran! Curran is the man who struck me most. Such imagination! There never was anything like it. He was wonderful even to me, who had seen many remarkable men of the time. The riches of his Irish imagination were inexhaustible. I have heard that man speak more poetry than I have ever seen written, though I saw him seldom and but occasionally."

Lord Erskine, a lawyer, and subsequently a Judge on the English Bench, was a contemporary of Curran's, and one who had acquired great fame as an orator of the first degree. His merits and those of Curran frequently formed a subject of comparison. They were both once dining at the table of George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales. This royal personage, despite his voluptuous tendencies, had the good taste to gather round his table the collective genius, learning, and wit of the kingdom. On the occasion in question, His Royal Highness, out of respect for his guests, directed the conversation to the legal profession. Lord Erskine eloquently took the lead: "No man in the

land," said he, "need be ashamed to belong to such a profession. For my part, of a noble family myself, I felt no degradation in practising it—it has added not only to my wealth but to my dignity." Curran was silent, which the host observing, called on him for his opinion. "Lord Erskine," says Curran, "has so eloquently described all the advantages to be derived from the profession that I hardly thought my poor opinion was worth adding. But perhaps it was that I am a better practical instance of it than his lordship—he was ennobled by birth before he came to it, but it has," said he, making an obeisance to his royal host, "it has, in my person raised the son of a peasant to the table of his prince!"

Lord Byron has contrasted Erskine and Curran in one of his poems, at a period ten years previous to the time he wrote the eulogy of Curran just quoted, and when his knowledge of the Irish orator was only fresh. He designates Curran "Longbow," and Erskine "Strongbow." Enumerating the guests at a dinner party, he says :—

"There also were two wits, by acclamation
 Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed,
 Both lawyers, and both men of education ;
 But Strongbow's wit was of more polished breed.
 Longbow was rich in an imagination,
 As beautiful and bounding as a steed,
 But sometimes stumbling over a potato,
 While Strongbow's best things might have come from Cato.

"Strongbow was like a new tuned harpsichord,
 But Longbow wild as an Æolian harp,
 With which the winds of Heaven can claim accord,
 And make a music either flat or sharp.
 Of Strongbow's talk you would not change a word :
 At Longbow's phrases you would sometimes carp :
 Both wits—one born so, and the other bred—
 This by the heart, his rival by the head."

Curran's domestic happiness was shrouded by two melancholy catastrophes, sufficient to break the spirits of a gayer and livelier temperament than his. His daughter lost her heart to a young gentleman named Robert Emmet, who was on visiting terms at Curran's house. Surely never did maiden lay the treasures of her love at the feet of one more worthy of them than this young Robert Emmet, the purest patriot, and the grandest soul that ever loved a

country—that ever wooed a damsel—ever met a patriot martyr's death. His fruitless insurrection cost him his liberty, but did not change his heart; he could have fled, but his love would not permit him to go far from the mistress of his affections. He was arrested, and his blood stained the scaffold.

“He had lived for his love, for his country he died;
They were all that to life had entwined him;
Nor soon shall the tears of his country be dried,
Nor long shall his love stay behind him.”

This was too much for Curran. His young and fair daughter, doomed to disappointment, melancholy, and a broken heart, the young friend whom he loved “torn like a blasted oak sudden away;” but what was more vexatious than bitter was the suspicion that would arise concerning his loyalty, from the fact that the young conspirator had such close intimacy with himself, and had so frequently visited his house. He knew that those suspicions would arise, and he determined to anticipate any action on the part of the Government. He went and delivered up all his papers to the Attorney-General, who invited him into the presence of the Privy Council, where all was made clear, and he was saved from further trouble. But a far greater affliction than this was in store for him. His wife, after a quarter of a century from the date of their marriage, proved unfaithful, and eloped with a dissipated clergyman, a Rev. Mr. Sandys. She afterwards repented; and though Curran never lived with her after, she was supported by his bounty up to the time of her death.

In the year 1806, Curran was raised to the dignity of Master of the Rolls in Ireland. His judicial decisions were as remarkable for their justice, as his advocacy had been for its eloquence. I have already sufficiently implied, if I have not broadly stated, that Curran was of the Protestant religion; but he knew not what bigotry was, and he cherished the affections of his heart for the degraded Catholic, as well as for his own co-religionists basking in the sunshine of patronage and power. I select one instance of his broad toleration, worthy of the noblest mind. A will case came before him, and it was alleged that the will was fraudulently obtained by “one John Power, a Popish priest.” “I see no semblance of fact,” says Curran, “to

sustain such a charge. Who does this 'one John Power, a Popish priest, turn out to be? I find he is a Catholic clergyman, a Doctor of Divinity, a Titular Bishop in the diocese of Waterford. And yet I am now pressed to believe that this gentleman has obtained this will by fraud. Every fact now appearing repels this charge. I cannot but say that the personal character of the person accused repels it still more strongly. Can I be brought, on grounds like those now before me, to believe that a man having the education of a scholar, the habits of a religious life, and vested with so high a character in the ministry of the Gospel, could be capable of so detestable a profanation as is flung upon him? Can I forget that he is a Christian Bishop, clothed not in the mere authority of a sect, but clothed in the indelible character of the Episcopal order; suffering no diminution from his supposed heterodoxy, nor drawing any increase or confirmation from the merits of his conformity, should he think proper to renounce what we call the errors of his faith? Can I bring my mind, on so slight, or, rather, on no grounds, to believe that he could so trample under his feet all the impressions of that education, of those habits, and of that high rank in the sacred ministry of the Gospel which he holds, as to sink to the odious impiety which is imputed to him? Can I bring myself to believe that such a man, at the bedside of his dying fellow-creature, would be capable, with one hand, of presenting the cross before her uplifted eye, and with the other, of basely thieving from her the miserable dregs of this world, of which his perfidious tongue was employed in teaching her a Christian's estimate? I do not believe it: on the contrary, I am (as far as it belongs to me in this interlocutory way to judge of the fact) as perfectly convinced that the conduct of Dr. Power was what it ought to be, as I am that the testatrix is dead."

Curran died in London, on the 14th of October, 1817, in the 68th year of his age; and it now becomes our duty to take a brief retrospect of his career; and photograph, as it were to our mind's eye, the character of the man, so that we may store it away into our intellectual album, and cherish it for perpetual admiration. Curran's life and character were the life and character of the orator and the patriot, the advocate of his country's rights, the advocate of justice to persecuted man. We cannot conceive him

except as the personification of eloquence and patriotism. All his battles, and all his triumphs, were fought and achieved in the senate, or at the bar; he was ever either seeking to benefit his fellow-countrymen by the enactment of just laws, or striving to save them from the perils of laws already passed—passed in a spirit of diabolical hatred, and enforced with a vindictiveness still more atrocious. All the labours of his life, all the efforts of his genius, all the treasures of his intellect, all the sacrifices of his fame and fortune, were at the service of Ireland and the Irish. His silence could have been bought, were he venal, and the advocate of Ireland's rights could have been transformed into the approver and abettor of Ireland's wrongs; but thanks to his integrity of character, he spurned the arts of corruption, and his name, instead of being a bye-word of national shame and disgrace, stands forth as a beacon light to guide and cheer posterity.

His eloquence was of the very highest order; it was not the eloquence of art, carefully studied and prepared, and delivered with histrionic effort, and dramatic grace; it was not eloquence manufactured according to the inflexible rules of rhetoricians. No: Curran sounded the depths of the human heart, not as it is in some parts of the world, not as it is moulded and shaped under certain influences, not as it may be moved by any special or peculiar modes of appeal, but as it is in every human breast, as it is made by God, the seat of passion and sentiment, the soft wax on which God has impressed those principles of rectitude which neither climate, nor education, nor any local influence can alter or erase; hence Curran is always stirring up the hearts and emotions of his hearers; he is ever awakening slumbering conception, faded remembrances, early impressions; ever exciting tenderness, pity, remorse; ever vindicating the principle of God's eternal justice; ever harping on the sweet but melancholy chord of human conscience. This characteristic of Curran's eloquence alone would be sufficient to stamp it as sublime. I have already spoken of Curran's imagination. It was a marvel of its kind. Tropes and figures, and images, sparkled through his speech in such brightness and profusion that his eloquence was like a river with a bed of golden sands, illumined by the bright sunshine of genius. "His imagination," says Byron, "is beyond human." His wit and

humour also were transcendant, and under more favourable circumstances might have graced his oratory more than they have done; but he lived and spoke at a time when wit, for the most part, would savour of levity, and humour would be simply heartless. The events of his day were too grave for the lighter efforts of oratory; he loved his kind in a spirit of true philanthropy, and his heart bled to witness the persecutions and bloodshed to which they were victimized, and the cold calculating baseness with which their lives and liberties were sold and purchased. Hence his oratory frequently partakes of the scathing, and the sarcastic, and the objurative. He inveighed in tones of thunder against the vices of his country's oppressors; he told Judges and juries to their faces that they were trampling on the sacred rights of justice, and this he did with a boldness and courage worthy of a cause so noble. "You may assassinate me," said he, on one occasion, when the courthouse was surrounded with military, "you may assassinate me, but you cannot intimidate me." Yes, in Curran's eloquence there is scarcely a feature more remarkable than his indomitable courage. No speaker ever needed that virtue more, and few displayed it to such perfection. Indeed it has been said of the greatest speeches celebrated in history that they were spoken at times when personal danger most threatened their deliverers. We have seen and admired his courage in defending Father Neale, the humble priest, against the pampered and cowardly lordling of Doneraile. We have seen him challenged four times to mortal combat, and four times accepting the challenge, for the courage with which he pleaded the causes of his clients. Ireland was then suffering under a reign of terror. Trial by law was a contemptible farce, a wretched mockery, a bare formality; the number of persons executed by law fell far short of those sacrificed in butcheries and burnings by a barbarous soldiery let loose upon an unoffending and defenceless people. In times like these Curran stood alone. In pleading the cause of the accused he had to run the danger of being supposed to sympathize with their sentiments and conduct; and in paying them the humane tribute of his advocacy, he had to incur the rancorous hatred of those who tortured and oppressed them.

Pathos was a remarkable feature of Curran's eloquence. He had the soul of a true poet, and tenderness, and me-

lancholy, and pity, those soft, sweet, sad emotions, are the noblest treasures in the poet's soul. They were essentially his ; he loved solitude, and often attuned his soul to the solemn tones of his violoncello, when no one else was nigh. He loved to play old Irish airs ; their sadness pleased him, and their occasional liveliness gave to the sombre clouds of his thoughts their silver lining. Those sad strains nurtured within him the sympathies awakened by the actual contemplation of his country's wrongs. He wept and sighed, and lamented over her desolation ; there was a music, a rhythm in his speech according exquisitely with the passion of his thoughts, so that the whole might seem to the rapt listener the wail of one of Sion's children attuned to the melancholy music of his harp on the lonely rivers of Babylon. "He was one of those," says a distinguished writer (Giles), "whose thoughts make melody in conception, and which coming into words are born into song. All his faculties were musical, his intellect, his imagination, his emotions ; and these, all having spontaneous union and utterance in his eloquence, made that eloquence the witchcraft and magic that it was. This made it different from all other eloquence, not in power, but in kind ; it was not so much the eloquence of logic as of enchantment, not so much like the sword of Goliath as like the harp of David."

Curran's humour was often such that one would not know whether to say it was laughable or serious ; it became so severely sarcastic. Thus, on one occasion, when contesting an election, he said to the voters of the rival candidate, that "they might be seen coming like the beasts of the field, in droves, from their pastures, presenting a picture of human nature, in the state of degradation such as never had been witnessed since Nebuchadnezzar was at grass." Of an Irish secretary, for whom he had a great contempt, he said, when inveighing against him, that he would not imitate the Roman tyrant's practice of "torturing insects." He described an English ministry as "a motley group, without virtue, or character, or talents ; the sort of Cabinet we have laughed at on the stage, where the 'potent, grave, and reverend seignors' were composed of scene-shifters and candle-snuffers, robed in old curtains, and wigged from the stores of the theatre." On another occasion he spoke of "the princely virtues and imperial

qualifications, the consummate wisdom and sagacity of our steadfast friend and ally, the Emperor of all the Russias—a constellation of all virtue, compared with whose radiance the Ursa Major but twinkles as the glowworm.”

Curran is supposed by some to be one of those who established what has been called the school of Irish eloquence, that is, fervid, impassioned oratory, appealing to the feelings, and careless of impressing the intellect. This style of eloquence is spoken of with contempt, and justly should it be so, if the speaker did not convince the reason as well as move the heart; and, no doubt, our country has produced many such speakers, gifted by nature with a wondrous flow of words, sparkling with imagery, heated with passion, vivid with Celtic fire. We meet them in private life, we meet them on the public platform. The village pedagogue is peculiar to Ireland; the man who uses words of “learned length and thundering sound;” who mistakes paraphrases for oratory, and sound for sentiment: the village poet is no less racy of the Irish soil; the dreamer who is ever wandering in the bright morning of May, by the green banks of some sparkling river, where he encounters a lovely damsel, who first declines his amorous attentions, but finally consoles him with her hand and heart. In no country in the world is a debate so warmly and enthusiastically, and so eloquently, conducted as in Ireland. There the oratory on both sides is so fairly balanced that victory is often impossible without the intervention of the fists or the black-thorn, which has an effect far more stunning than wordy arguments on an adversary. Yes, there is an Irish school of oratory, and it was about Curran’s time it came into vogue. When, indeed, was there such occasion for it? When the speaker’s passions were aroused by the contemplation of the cruelties with which his country was visited, and the sufferings his countrymen endured, the coldest nature should be eloquent, when speaking of those atrocious deeds. The grandest specimens of eloquence ever recorded in history were delivered in times of great social strife, great national upheaving, amid the ruins of a country, or over the cradle of a young revolution. It was towards the close of the Hebrew nationality that their prophets started up, and proclaimed the ruin and captivity about to befall their fellow-countrymen. What eloquence can compare with that of Isaiah, sublime and impassioned?

or with Jeremiah, wailing and despondent over the calamities of their race? Demosthenes flourished—the greatest orator the world ever saw—amid the crash of the Grecian republics. Cicero was the last orator of Rome: standing on the bridge that separated the prosperous Rome of the Consuls from the effete and degenerate Rome of the Cæsars. Mirabeau's eloquence flamed like a meteor amid the chaos of the French Revolution. So was it with Curran; he lived and spoke when his native land was steeped to the very lips in woe; when "'twas treason to love her, and death to defend." Manifold were the thoughts that stirred his brain and quickened his tongue; the ancient glory of his country, the virtues of her children, their courage and constancy, through every peril and misfortune; the gleam of sunshine, short and transient, beaming from the Irish Parliament, and its sudden extinction in the Act of Union. Here was food for thought—here was fuel for the fire of eloquence, pride, passion, glory, hope, and, last of all, despair! Peace be with thy ashes, John Philpot Curran, as they repose in the sacred soil of Glasnevin, and may thy memory be ever cherished with pride by the grateful descendants of those in fighting whose battles thou didst display the sublimest valour of heroism, and the purest chastity of honour!

LECTURE

ON THE BIBLE.¹

GENTLEMEN OF THE YOUNG MEN'S SOCIETY,—
In opening the Second Session of our Literary and Debating Guild, it is more or less necessary that I should address to you some observations appropriate to the occasion. And in the selection of a subject for this address, I confess I have laboured under no small difficulty; for the subject, to be suitable, should partake of a literary character, and then the field of literature is so vast, and my acquaintance with it so superficial, that I sometimes feared I should give up the task of selection in despair. I felt like one placed for an hour or two in a large library, filled with the rarest and most interesting works, and delighted at the opportunity afforded him of enjoying an exquisite intellectual treat. My fate almost resembled his; for, in such case, it invariably happens that the *helluo librorum* wanders from case to case, pulls out one book after another, sips like a bee of every flower in the garden of literature, and at last, when his time for leaving arrives, finds that he has done nothing; that his appetite has been only stimulated, and not cloyed; that, had he confined himself for the few hours to the first volume he opened, he would have derived some advantage; that he would have enriched his mind with some useful knowledge, and left with sensations of pleasure instead of disappointment. Turning over this comparison in my mind, I at length resolved to bring the matter to an issue, and, advancing boldly to my own private book-shelves, I seized the first volume that presented itself, and determined that I should not wander outside it for a subject. The book was—The Bible! I

¹ Delivered to the Cork Young Men's Society, October 13, 1869.

was struck by the circumstance, and suddenly a flood of thought enveloped my mind. Here, thought I, is the book of books—the Bible, that is, *the book* by excellence: containing historical records by far the oldest in existence. The first five books, which, taken together, are called the Pentateuch, were written more than three thousand years ago, almost one thousand years before the date of any authentic history known to us: whilst some of the latest historical records contained in it, those of Esdras and Nehemias, are fully as old as the works of Herodotus, who has been called “the father of history,” and of Thucydides, his scarcely less renowned contemporary. This book is no mere human composition, but the Inspired Word of the Most High, containing His law, describing His perfections, asserting His glory, sounding His praises, and proclaiming Him the Creator, the Redeemer, the Judge, and the Reward of the human race. But, abstracting altogether from its sacred character, I find it to be the most extraordinary and the most important book ever compiled. It contains the only authentic account of the creation of the world, and of all things therein. While other histories, in their descriptions of these beginnings, bewilder the reader with speculations and doubts, and obscure fables, the Scripture, in language simple as it is sublime, traces the origin of the universe and of man with plain fidelity and unwavering assurance clearly superhuman. It points out what all the research and reflection of philosophy could never attain to, that man fell away by a moral fault from a height of moral and intellectual grandeur, to which he has ever since been striving in vain to re-ascend. Indeed some great Christian thinkers hold that, even without revelation, it would be easy to surmise that man in his present state, evincing so many characteristics of greatness and degradation, ambitious, yet grovelling, aspiring to things above, yet clinging to things below, must have degenerated from some original type of human perfection; but this Bible—this book which I hold in my hand—explains in a few words what philosophy only vaguely guesses at. It tells that this great creature—man—once flourishing in intellectual vigour, rich in spiritual endowments, and with a body exempt from the doom of decay, by an act of disobedience to his Creator sacrificed those blessings, and entailed upon himself the

ruin and misery which ever since prevail in the world. This book, then, is, as it were, a history, by anticipation, of all mankind. It details the principal facts on which the history of the world revolves, the dispersion of the human race after the great deluge; the formation of nations and kingdoms; the history of the Jews, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, of Babylon and Nineveh, and other great kingdoms and cities, of which now little more than the memories remain. It describes the great work of man's redemption by the tremendous sacrifice on Calvary, an event on which, viewed in the cold light of an historical fact, the whole face of the world, the human mind, and human government, underwent a sweeping, sudden, and salutary change; and it records the history of Him who wrought that redemption—the Son of God, who, regarded merely as a man, was by far the noblest in nature, the wisest, the most philanthropic, the most wonder-working, the most amiable character, that ever appeared on this earth. Within this wondrous volume I read with awe and admiration the words and deeds of that great Being; His lessons of virtue surpassing all the wisdom of the ancients, and His exposition of that new commandment of charity, which, removing the distinction of Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, binds the whole human family in the genial linking of fraternal love. Here, furthermore, I find narrated the most astounding miracles wrought by the Apostles of this Divine Chief; and their maxims and preachings no less sublime, no less wise than His. I trace in those hallowed pages their marvellous career, and discover how, though barely a dozen of the humblest men, in one of the obscurest regions of the world, “into every land their sound goes forth; and their voices unto the ends of the earth;” they proceed on a mission, whose successful termination was to be manifested in the conversion of the whole world to the doctrines which they propounded—in the subversion of the Roman Empire, with its unbounded sway, and the substitution, within the walls of the great metropolis, of a dynasty which was to rule the souls of all mankind until time shall be no more. In this book, or rather collection of books, I find all sorts of styles, and all varieties of narrative, epic majesty, pastoral simplicity, lyric fire, serious instruction, grave historical description, and lively and rapid dramatic

action. I peruse the inspired language of the prophets, who thunder forth their awful denunciations against the errors and corruptions of the people, and pronounce upon them the vengeance of the Most High; or I hearken to the inconsolable lamentations poured forth on the captivity of God's chosen people, and the desolation and solitude with which their country has been visited. In a word, whatever noble passion of the soul I wish to awaken, or to foster, whatever truly great ambition I would seek to gratify, whatever wisdom I would acquire, whatever poetic fancy I would conjure up, whatever pure pleasure I would enjoy, whatever high hopes I would enkindle, I need but to open this sacred volume, this priceless treasure of saint or sinner, scholar or unlearned, and there I shall find the satisfaction of every spiritual craving, the gratification of every intellectual desire.

Such, gentlemen, were the thoughts that passed through my mind, when it occurred to me that the Bible would be a good subject on which to address you! And, surely, if the reading of books be a matter of prime necessity for the members of a literary society, a great share of their attention should be devoted to the study of that volume which stands first in the library of a Christian. Let me, then, ask you to consider still further the claims which this great book has upon your respect and consideration. No book has ever been so much read or studied, and none has ever been so fiercely assailed. The Pagan sophist, and the modern sceptic, have endeavoured by all the efforts of a perverted ingenuity to find it wanting in authenticity, to prove that it contains statements at variance with the truth. Exultingly they brought forward the recent discoveries of science, astronomical and geological facts, to show a discordance between the Bible narrative and the evident clearness of their own deductions. But neither in the heavens above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the unfathomable depths of the ocean, were they able to discover aught that could shake the simple fidelity of the inspired narration. Nay, between it and the revelations of science the most perfect harmony was found to exist. It was not without a struggle that scepticism found itself worsted in this attempt to fasten untruthfulness on the Bible, and science and revealed religion appeared for a time to be marshalled against each other. But, before the

calm light of unimpassioned research, those discrepancies gradually vanished, and science found herself once more not the foe but the handmaid of religion. Hence, within the last half century, the true Christian Church has received the most illustrious accessions from the ranks of the learned of every nation throughout the length and breadth of Europe. Were we not, as faithful children of the Church, assured of the inspiration of the sacred volume, this very coincidence of scientific discoveries with scriptural statements, written when science was not even in its cradle, should be sufficient to convince us that the Bible is the work of no merely human hand, but that it was written in the radiance of a light by which the mind of the writer was, in spite of him, illumined.

But for the untiring vigilance and jealous care of the Catholic Church, the Bible could never have been preserved. In the very earliest ages of Christianity its integrity was seriously endangered. As genuine coin induces badly-disposed people to substitute a counterfeit, the pure Word of God was imitated by profane pretenders, who wished to palm off on the faithful doctrines that would sanction the indulgence of their passions. Bold heresiarchs ventilated novel and spurious doctrines under the names of the Apostles. Others, less daring, were content to alter or interpolate the sacred writings according to their fancy, while many genuine writings of holy men, such as Barnabas and Clement—writings containing sound doctrine and moral inculcations—were sought to be put forward as inspired. In this *melange* of opinions, pretensions, and substitutions, it was a matter of the most serious moment that the really genuine Scripture writings should have their authenticity definitely settled. The difficulty of fixing this question was increased by the fact that the authority even of the genuine books of Scripture was doubted and canvassed by many pious Christians, learned prelates, and large communities of the faithful all through the Church. Thus the Epistles of Saints James and Jude, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the second of St. Peter, the second and third of John, and the Apocalypse, were held by many to be devoid of inspiration. Clearly there was no means left, but one, of solving a question involved in such obscurity, and that means was the decision of an infallible authority, which the Church

justly claimed for herself. This decision she was not tardy in pronouncing. She collected evidences of the faith that prevailed on this subject through the several Churches of Christendom, the opinions of bishops and patriarchs, and then proclaimed once and for ever that the Bible such as it is at this moment, and no other, was the Inspired Word of God. All doubts and fears were thus in a moment removed, and the Sacred Volume was secured for ever from all attempts by which its character or its integrity could be seriously assailed.

But the Bible had other difficulties to encounter; for in those days of persecution, Christians were forced to deliver up to their torturers whatever copies of the Sacred Word they happened to possess, and these copies were instantly destroyed. This was a very serious danger to the Bible, for in those days only few copies of it could possibly exist, owing to its great size, and the slowness of transcription. The Church never sanctioned the surrender of the Sacred Volume, even under the terrors of death, but denounced those who were weak enough to deliver it up as "traitors" or traitors, in a wide sense of the word.

Later on, the preservation of the Holy Scriptures became more and more difficult, from a variety of causes. Rome was, of course, the great centre of the Church, and the chief custodian of this sacred trust, the Word of God. After the persecutions under the Roman Emperors had ceased, a scarcely less formidable assault was made on Christendom by the hordes of barbarians from the East, whose savage glory was to pull down and uproot the monuments of all that was great and noble in the world. In the destruction of churches, and schools, and monastic institutions, there must have been made a sweeping inroad on the existing copies of the Bible. The Goths were not less sparing of it than the Huns, but even these were less dangerous enemies of the Bible than Christians themselves, many of whom, in those times of universal conflict, burned and destroyed each other's strongholds, with all their effects, and regarded as a special prize, as a spoil of rare value, the Bible of their enemy, with its covers of silver and gold, all studded with precious stones. But the Church, all the while, guarded the Sacred Volume as the apple of her eye: she watched, protected, and cherished it—she saved it from the rage of an Attila as well as the

fury of a Domitian, from the sword of an Alaric as well as the brand of a Dioclesian ; bearing it like a stout swimmer aloft in her hand over the troublous waters of persecution, until she reached in safety the shores of civilization, where in due time she handed it over to the disciples of Guttenberg, the printer, to be multiplied and diffused beyond the possibility of extinction.

Indeed the devotion of the Catholic Church to the Bible is one of the most striking of her many characteristics. She thunders her anathemas against those who seek to alter or corrupt it even in the smallest word. It is the charter of her rights, the title-deed of her authority ; its doctrines and maxims she expounds and enforces from her pulpits ; in her schools, colleges, and universities, she teaches it to her children, lay and clerical ; it is the standard of her faith and morals. The learned within her fold have piled up commentaries on commentaries in explanation of the sacred text ; her professors of theology build up their arguments from this magnificent *repertoire* of knowledge ; her preachers speak like men inspired when drawing their eloquence from this Divine source, and her liturgy abounds with quotations and allusions and images derived from this inexhaustible treasury of all that is beautiful and sublime.

One great agency, in fact the greatest, which the Church employed in the preservation of the Bible, was the indefatigable industry of the monks during the middle, or, as they are styled by some, the dark ages. Indeed without this resource it is hard, humanly speaking, to see how the Sacred Volume could have been saved from destruction ; for learning, extinguished all over the world, lived only within the sacred precincts of convents—its votaries, swept to ruin by the deluge of barbarism that flooded Europe, had but few survivors in the ark of the monastic institution. The monks, holy and learned, secluded from the world, with plenty of time on their hands, spent, many of them, their whole lives in the transcription of the Bible. And, not content with a bare transcript, they loved to embellish and decorate the sacred page with cunning devices of illumination, with vignettes and miniatures, and various styles of painting, which at the present day excite the wonder and challenge the rivalry of artists. “Books,” says Gerbert, “were then so

beautifully painted and embellished with emblems and miniatures, that the whole seemed to be the produce, not of human but of angelic hands." When we consider the size of the Sacred Volume, and the pen as the only means of producing copies, we may form some notion of the prodigious labour expended in this arduous attack. One anecdote will suffice to illustrate this. "Fifty years," says a trustworthy authority (Lemoine, in his *Typographical Antiquities*), "were sometimes employed to produce a single volume, an evidence of which occurred at the sale of the late Sir William Burrell's books in 1796. Among these was a MS. Bible beautifully written on vellum and illuminated, which had taken the writer half a century to execute. The writer, Guido de Iars, began it in his fortieth year, and did not finish it till he had accomplished his ninetieth, A. D. 1294, in the reign of Philip the Fair, as appeared by the writer's own autograph in the front of the book."

The Church, at a very early period, translated the Bible into Latin, which was the language most generally in use, and subsequently into the other languages of Europe, that all might read and profit by the Sacred Word. I shall speak, before I have done, of the limitations within which that reading should be confined. Under the auspices of the Church, one of the most gigantic and important works ever undertaken in the cause of sacred literature was the production, by the celebrated Spanish Cardinal Ximenes, of the Polyglot edition of the Bible, in the year 1517. That great prelate founded the University of Alcalá, on the site of the ancient Complutum, a seat of learning that became in good time one of the most renowned all over the globe. Rivalling the famous University of Salamanca, it was pronounced by the Spaniards "the eighth wonder of the world." Here Ximenes proceeded in his great work, the production of a Polyglot Bible. The text of the Sacred Scripture had before his time been deplorably corrupt owing to the inattention or ignorance of copyists. But the invention of printing gave a new impetus to every branch of learning, and promised Biblical scholars great advantages in their study of the Bible. The constant perversion of the meaning of Scripture by those who were aliens to the Church made it increasingly necessary to study the Sacred Volume in its original languages, so as to be able

to refute the impudent assertions of upstart divines. This was the undertaking of Ximenes. No translation, he held could represent the original, and the MSS. of the Latin Vulgate were painfully discrepant. It was needful, therefore, to go back to the prime sources, and "correct the books of the Old Testament by the Hebrew text, and those of the New Testament by the Greek text." But it is not my province here to detail how the work of the great Cardinal was achieved. My object is to show what solicitude the Catholic Church has always manifested in the interests of the Sacred Word. I may, however, state that in this great undertaking several Jewish converts and Greek professors were employed. Enormous sums were spent in the purchase of ancient manuscripts, and some were lent to the prelate by Leo X., that world-renowned patron of learning, sacred and profane. It is calculated that a sum of money no less than £25,000 sterling was spent in the preparation of this work, and fifteen years were spent in its completion. It is known as the Complutensian Polyglot, from Complutum, the ancient city, on the site of which Alcalá was built.

To show her reverence for the Bible, the Church offers up the great Sacrifice of the Mass in language chiefly selected from the Sacred Word. In the consecration of the sub-deacon and deacon, as her ministers, she places in their hands, respectively, the Book of the Epistles and of the Gospels, which she empowers and charges them to read in the Church of God, for the living and the dead. Her priests are obliged, every day of their lives, to recite the Divine Office, which is almost entirely composed of the Psalms of David. Before they receive jurisdiction from their superiors to minister in the Church, they are obliged to make a profession of faith, and to affirm their adhesion to this profession by solemnly laying their hands on the Gospels, and saying "so help me God, and these Holy Gospels of God." In fact, the very restrictions which the Church imposes on the reading of the Bible—restrictions, by the way, which were never imposed until various abuses had arisen—indicate the great solicitude she feels for the welfare of her children, and the respect due by her to the Sacred Volume. But, speaking to faithful and intelligent members of the Church, it is needless

for me to laud her zeal in this, as in every other concern where the true interests of religion are at stake.

I have spoken of the labours of the monks in transcribing and decorating the Bible. I cannot leave this subject without amplifying it a little more. No trouble or expense was spared in beautifying the exterior of the book as well as the interior: as if their esteem for the Word of God was so great, that they deemed no case too magnificent in which to enshrine it. The Emperor Charlemagne, that great hero of Christianity, presented to St. Angilbert a copy of the Gospels written in letters of gold; and there are few monasteries of any great antiquity on the Continent where there are not preserved to the present day manuscript copies of the Bible, several hundred years old, and remarkable for the splendour and richness of their decorations. Pope Leo III. presented to a church a copy of the Gospels bound in pure gold and studded with precious gems, and to another church he presented a second, so heavy with decorative work, that it weighed seventeen pounds. Hincmar of Rheims gave to his cathedral a copy of the Gospels written in letters of gold and silver, bound in plates of gold, and studded with jewels. But instances of this kind could be multiplied to any amount, all going to show, that in those ages when the Christian faith flourished so vigorously in Europe, the people spared no effort to show how intensely they loved the Sacred Volume, and what they were willing to do in order to manifest this love.

Nor were they content with merely possessing the Bible: they read it with diligence and attention. Difficult as it was to procure copies before the invention of printing, there were few houses, at least of those who were able to read, where it was not found; and such as were not able to obtain a copy could read it in the monastery, or in the church, where a large Bible was always suspended by a chain, for casual readers to come and study, according to the testimony of the venerable Bede. But the monastery was the great resource for the curious or the wisdom-seeking: there some sage monk, skilled in biblical lore, was ever ready to instruct all comers—peer and peasant—in the saving Word; and we may recall with excusable pride the period when Ireland, too, contributed

her share in this diffusion of the sacred truths—when from every part of Europe flocked the votaries of learning, and in the monastic and academic halls of Lismore and Armagh, of Benchoir and Clonard, they sat at the feet, and imbibed lessons of scriptural wisdom from the lips of the Gamaliels who flourished in those good old days.

Many erroneous opinions prevail as to the respect entertained for the Bible by the Catholic Church, chiefly from her supposed desire that it should not be read by the laity. Thus it was commonly asserted, as an admitted fact, that the invention of printing and the consequent diffusion amongst the people of the Bible was the immediate cause of the so-called Reformation. This is an error that betrays alike an ignorance of facts and an ingrained prejudice: for, in truth, the doctrines of the Reformers had least success where printing was most extensively employed. Before the Reformation, and after it, the presses of Italy and France teemed with activity, while the number of books published in all the countries, taken together, in which Protestantism prevailed, was not, in the 16th century, equal to the number printed in the city of Venice alone. That the spread of the reformed doctrines did not result from reading, whether of the Bible or other works, we have the testimony of Hume, the historian, who cannot well be suspected of favour towards Catholicity. "The rapid advance," he says, "of the Lutheran doctrine, and the violence with which it was embraced, prove sufficiently that it owed not its success to reason and reflection."

Those who are favourable to the view, that free reading of the Bible produced the Reformation, boldly affirm that Luther's German version of it was the first vernacular edition ever given to the world. So far is this from the truth, that in an article contained in the second number of the "Dublin Review," no less than fifty editions are indicated, which were published in various dialects of Europe before the year 1534, when Luther published his. That the Catholic Church had amply provided for the wants of her children in this respect is clearly evinced by the fact, that two hundred editions of the Latin Vulgate had been successively published, which, together with the vernacular editions of which I speak, were quite sufficient for all

Christendom, inasmuch as, at that time, the ~~as~~ majority of the people were illiterate: and amongst those who could read, the greater number were ecclesiastics. No doubt, after the Reformation, copies of the Bible were cheaply printed, and widely diffused; but this is no stronger a proof of its being the cause of the Reformation, than the same means of conversion can be said to have reformed the people of Ireland, where Bible diffusion, by benevolent Anglicans, seems to have reached its acme. Indeed, to such an extent did ignorance of literature of any kind prevail before the Reformation, that Bible-reading could not possibly have produced it. Thus, the greatest men of the age, and the proudest nobility, thought it no shame to be ignorant of letters, but in many instances despised book-knowledge as a pursuit only fit for monks, or priests, or people of that kind. In the fourteenth century, Du Guesclin, one of the greatest warriors France ever produced, could neither read nor write, "after the example," adds his biographer, "of all the nobles of that age;" and two hundred years later, another Constable of France, De Montmorency, the first nobleman of the kingdom, was equally illiterate. Charlemagne spent a great portion of his life before he began the alphabet; and I think I have read somewhere, that Edward the Fourth of England treated a knowledge of letters as an accomplishment unworthy of the dignity of a monarch. "Marksman" is a word in the English language to denote a person who cannot write, but who signs any document with his mark. In that instrument, which is known as the Solemn League and Covenant, drawn up by the Parliament in the reign of Charles I., and preserved in the British Museum, an abundance of marksmen appear. And, it is curious to observe, that as the subscribers swore that they would do all in their power for the extirpation of Popery in the kingdom, their horror of that foreign bugbear was so great, that they did not sign with a whole cross, but with three-quarters of one, something like the letter T. But I need not multiply examples to show to what an extent an ignorance of letters prevailed in those countries, for it is an admitted fact. The Bible, therefore, was not read by the masses of the people, and, as a consequence, could not have produced the Reformation.

In the Catholic Church, the edition called the Latin Vulgate was that specially recognised as authentic. This

was a translation made chiefly by St. Jerome, and completed by others after him. It was not very classical in its style, but it appears to have been the best translation that could be made under the circumstances. In the 16th century a certain Sebastian Castalio attempted to transfuse the Sacred Text into Ciceronian Latin, but the result was a ridiculous failure.

The Council of Trent stamps the Latin Vulgate as the authentic version of the Scriptures. To this no one outside the Catholic Church can object. The words prefixed to the English Bible are just the same in import: "By His Majesty's special command—appointed to be read in churches."

It is remarkable that the first great effort of the printing press—the first fruit of this tree of knowledge—was the Latin Vulgate, which appeared about the year 1455, and is distinguished as the Mazarine Bible. This was done long before the Reformation was dreamt of, and was done under the auspices of the Catholic Church. And that the learned might want no means for a proper understanding of the Sacred Word, in addition to the Polyglot edition of Ximenes, already alluded to, she permitted the publication of other editions of the original text, in the various languages in which the component parts of the Bible were written. Thus the Septuagint was printed at the Aldine press in Venice in 1518. Four editions of a Hebrew Bible were published in Venice, by Daniel Bomberg, before the year 1517. A second Polyglot was published in Antwerp, under the auspices of Philip II. of Spain, and the standard edition of the Septuagint has long been that of Rome (1587), under the authority of Pope Sixtus Quintus. I may avail myself of this opportunity to explain what the Septuagint version of the Bible is. Septuaginta is a Latin word, signifying seventy, and the version of the Bible so called is said by Josephus to have been made by seventy-two elders, at the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, who reigned about 300 years before the birth of Christ.

These seventy-two elders were Egyptians, and thoroughly acquainted with Hebrew, and the translation was made into the Greek language. The Septuagint was, of course, only a translation of the Old Testament, as the New had not yet been written. It is constantly quoted by Josephus, and frequently by the writers of the New Testament.

But to return to the question which mainly occupies my attention in this lecture, namely, the care and solicitude manifested by the Church for the preservation and spread of the Bible; let me inform you that, from the year 1500 to 1536, no less than 568 editions of the Bible, or parts of it, were published in Europe; and that, out of that large number, only eighteen proceeded from the Protestant kingdoms of England, Sweden, Denmark, or its dependencies, which, by the way, had all become Protestant, without the assistance of the Bible. The first English Bible ever printed was that of Miles Coverdale, in 1536, under Henry VIII., several years after the Reformation in England was an accomplished fact. Four-fifths of these editions were printed in Italy, France, and Belgium, which are Catholic to the present day; a fact which proves that the reformed doctrines had least chance of success where Scripture teaching most prevailed. By Catholics, then, we may confidently assert, the sacred deposit was preserved during a succession of ages, amidst the ruins of time, the catastrophes of nature, and the assaults of men. It is, therefore, impossible to conceive how calumny can have the effrontery to state that the Catholic Church has a hatred of the Bible, and that she exercises all her influence to prevent the spread of it amongst her children. But calumny the Church can well afford to despise.

After the Reformation, the Bible was diffused more and more widely every day, and yet the disciples of the new religion did not increase in proportion. On the contrary, during the three hundred years that have elapsed since the death of Luther, with the sole exception of Holland and a few German States, no single kingdom has given its adhesion to the religion of the Reformers. And, with regard to Holland, the chief cause of its defection from Catholicity appears to have been a hatred of Spanish rule; yet, two-fifths of its whole population remain attached to the ancient faith.

The Bible was not the cause of the Reformation in England, for the first English version of the Sacred Volume ever published in that kingdom was, as I have said, that of Miles Coverdale, which appeared in 1535; whereas already, on the 30th of March, 1534, an Act had passed abolishing the power of the Pope in the kingdom. The execution of Bishop Fisher in June, 1535, and of Sir

Thomas More, in July of the same year, three months before Coverdale's Bible appeared, sufficiently prove that Henry was already, in the language of his statute book, "the only supreme head of the Church of England." Within the following half century several editions of this work appeared, but they produced no fixed adhesion to any certain form of belief in the kingdom, as is manifest from the fact that the people conformed to the faith of the Monarch, whatever it happened to be, in those times of fluctuating theological opinions. "Henry, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth," says Hallam, "found an almost equal compliance with their varying schemes of faith." Nor did the diffusion of the Bible help in the least to disseminate the new doctrines in England, for the reading of it was placed under various restrictions, which nullified the object of its publication. One of Henry's statutes ordained, that "no women, not gentle or noble, nor artificers, prentices, journeymen, &c., were to read the Bible or New Testament, in English, to himself, or any others, privately or openly;" and again, "parsons, vicars, and curates," says Strype, a historian in the following century, "did read so confusedly the Word of God, . . . humming and hawking thereat, that no man could understand." Again, the price of the Bible in the reign of Henry, ten and twelve shillings (equivalent to five or six pounds of our money), placed the volume quite beyond the reach of the masses of the people.

No national version of the Bible appeared in Scotland until 1579, and yet an Act passed in 1560, at the instigation of Knox, made Catholic worship penal in that kingdom. The first Gaelic Bible, printed in the only language known in the Highlands, did not appear until 1802, some centuries after their renunciation of Catholicity; and, in Wales, the first version appeared in 1588, some fifty years after the Bible is supposed to have converted them. Ireland was not forgotten in the zeal to convert the nations by Gospel light, and yet the first edition of the Bible in our native tongue did not appear until 1685, when it was brought out under the auspices of Bedel, Bishop of Dromore. Burnet, in his life of that prelate, dwelling on this fact, observes that the Bible is "a book always fatal to the Church of Rome." Strangely fatal indeed, for we read the Bible here, and yet Mother

Church has no more faithful and loving daughter than Ireland. Our enemies upbraid us with our ignorance. Because we would not accept their creed, they deprived us of all education. They laud the intelligence, the industry, the success of the Irish Northerns—the denizens of Protestant Ulster, the confiscated and planted province—while they reproach us Southern as poor, superstitious, benighted, and priest-ridden. But they forget, that to the Northern Protestants education was always easy of access, because it clashed not with their conscientious convictions, while the Southern Catholic would have no knowledge unless it flowed to him through the pure and consecrated channels of a faith which was dearer to him than life. The upbraiding of the ignorant Irish is like the robber taunting with his poverty the wretch whom he has despoiled. We rejected the Protestant Bible, but we cling with unshaken tenacity to our own.

Were it my main scope to show that the reading of the Bible was not the cause of the Reformation, I could produce facts and arguments on this subject relative to the religious changes in all the nations of Europe, to prove the contrary. But such is not my object; and to all those who have any curiosity on the subject, I would strongly recommend the perusal of an elaborate and most able article in a work of a fellow-citizen of ours, James Roche, the author of “Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, by an Octogenarian.”

The renowned Sir Thomas More has stated that “the whole Bible was, long before Wickcliffe’s days, by virtuous and well-learned men, translated into the English tongue, and by good and godly people, with devotion and soberness, well and reverently read.” This statement seems to controvert the generally-received opinion that Wickcliffe was the first translator of the Bible, or rather the Old Testament, into English. That Wickcliffe was not the first translator appears manifest from the fact that the diction of his Bible is altogether different from that of the secular literature of his times. It differs as widely from the religious prose writings of his contemporary, Chaucer, as does our own Bible from the best models of literary composition in the present day; and what is still more remarkable is, that the style which Wickcliffe himself employs in his controversial and other original works, is

very different from that in which he has clothed his translation. Hence, we might suppose, that Wickliffe merely reviewed earlier versions of the Old Testament. This seems borne out by the words of Cranmer, who says, "it is not much above one hundred years since Scripture hath not been accustomed to be read in this realm; many hundred years before that, it was translated and read in the Saxon's tongue; and when that language waxed old, and out of common usage, because folks should not lack the fruit of reading it, it was translated again into the newer language." Clear proofs these that the Catholic Church did not prohibit, but that she rather encouraged the reading of the Scriptures. Cranmer states that the reading of the Sacred Word fell off for a hundred years before the Reformation. This may, therefore, be ranked as one of the evils that precipitated that event, a neglect that needed reforming at the hands of a pious Clergy, and not at the command of a Monarch, whose vices were in the strongest opposition to the maxims and teachings of the Inspired Volume.

The first Catholic Bible published in the English language was printed at Douai, in the year 1609, which was, however, preceded by the English New Testament, published at Rheims, in 1582.

The Protestant version of Coverdale was revised in the year 1611, by order of King James I., and is that which is now in general use amongst the Protestants of these kingdoms. Some notion may be formed of the extent to which the learned interpreters were imbued with the Holy Spirit whom they invoked, from the language of strong-smelling adulation in which they addressed their royal master, who was at once a disgrace to royalty and to manhood. They dedicate their version of the Sacred Word "to that Sun in his strength, whom the heavenly hand of the Lord hath enriched with many singular graces, that he may be the wonder of the world," &c., &c. Notwithstanding the flattery of the dedication, there is little doubt that this version of the Bible is what those who read it pronounce it with pride, "the first classic of our literature—the highest exemplar of purity and beauty of language existing in our speech." In style it is, I believe, without comparison; but it is equally true that in accuracy of construction it falls far short of the Latin

Vulgate. Numerous English divines admit that the errors are frequent, and a revision desirable; but like the Ark of the Covenant, to touch it is profanation.

It is now time that we should see how far the laity are permitted by the Church to read the Sacred Writings, and under what restrictions that permission is granted. In searching diligently through the pages of history to inform myself on this subject, I find the following references to a prohibition by the Church against reading the Bible. First, I quote from Disraeli's "Curiosities of Literature"—"The following," he says, "are the *express words* contained in the regulation of the Popes to prohibit the use of the Bible. 'As it is manifest by *experience*, that if the use of the Holy Writings is permitted in the vulgar tongue, more evil than profit will arise, because of the temerity of man; it is for this reason all Bibles are prohibited with all their *parts*, whether they be printed or written, in whatever tongue soever: as also are prohibited all summaries or abridgments of Bibles, or any books of the Holy Writings, although they should only be historical, and that in whatever vulgar tongue they may be written.' " Now, it is remarkable, that this author, who, on all occasions, seems so eager to fasten a disreputable charge on the Catholic Church, has not produced the names of the Popes, the place, time, or circumstances connected with this important decree. He leaves us completely in the dark as to where, in the records of Canon Law, it may be found. It is also worthy of note that in the same article from which I have quoted these words, he unconsciously pays the highest possible tribute to the respect which the Church has always maintained for the Holy Scriptures. "It appears," he says, "by an Act dated in 1516 (before the Reformation), that in these days the Bible was called *Bibliotheca*, that is *per emphasis, the Library*. The word library was limited in its signification then to the Biblical writings; no other books compared with the Holy Writings appear to have been worthy to rank with them, or constitute what we call a library." The next reference to a prohibition of reading the Scriptures which I find, is contained in all ecclesiastical histories, and was pronounced by the legate of the Pope, at a Council held at Toulouse in the 13th century, for the repression of the Albigensian heresy. There the laity were forbidden to possess the

books of the Old or New Testament, or to have them translated into the vulgar tongue. Again, at a Council held at Oxford, in the year 1408, under Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, to condemn the errors of Wickliffe, the use of the Bible in the vulgar tongue was forbidden to the laity; and, last of all, the same prohibition was issued by Pope Pius IV., when publishing the decrees of the Council of Trent.

Now, in order to understand the nature of these various prohibitions, it is well to consider in what spirit, and for what purpose the Sacred Scriptures should be read by any one. If the books were merely the work of human minds, like all other books that have been written, no special danger could issue from their perusal: but being the Word of God, it is of the utmost importance that their interpretation should be confided to some authority capable of understanding them, and expounding them to the world. That authority is clearly the Infallible Church. It is only by her voice we know the Bible to be an inspired work at all. If we accept her authority for the inspiration, why decline it in the interpretation? Is she, who was empowered by the Most High, to select His Word from the mass of Writings scattered through the world, not able to understand that Word, and to explain it to man? Manifestly, then, he who would read the Word of God must read it only in the light supplied to him by the True Church. Again, what St. Peter says of the Epistles of St. Paul, he applies to the whole Scriptures, "that in them there are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." How, indeed, could it be otherwise? The Scriptures were written in language long since obsolete, and forgotten except by the learned. The idioms of those languages, the forms of speech, the figures, allusions, phrases, can scarcely be translated with accuracy into any modern tongue. Hence, even in the most perfect translation, errors more or less important may be found, and every century a necessity for some new translation is declared and attempted. Is it not then the height of folly for ordinary readers, nay, for most men of high intellectual culture, to imagine that they can thoroughly understand, of themselves, the full bearing of the whole Word of God? a science to which any one lifetime might fairly be de-

voted, if even thus it could be acquired. Behold, then, the wisdom of the Catholic Church, which says, by Divine authority I have pronounced those books inspired; by Divine authority I am commissioned to enlighten your ignorance concerning them, and to solve every difficulty in their interpretation. Read them with submission to me, if you would read them to salvation. But proud men refuse in many nations to accept the guidance of the Church in this matter; they read the Bible in their own light, and what is the consequence? I think, in the whole history of the human race, nothing is more deplorable than the follies and excesses that have ensued from the exercise of private judgment in the reading of the Scriptures. The first Reformers proclaimed this right; but, in their eagerness to shake off the authority of the Pope, they proclaimed it without explanation or restriction. The results were fearful. Having removed the Pope as final arbiter in Scriptural disputes, no course was open for them but to permit every one to interpret Scripture for himself; but as this principle, carried to its fullest extent, was not sustainable, they were obliged to rely for support upon another, viz., that the Bible is an easy book, within the comprehension of all minds, and that the Divine revelations contained in it are always clear to all, St. Peter's words just quoted to the contrary notwithstanding. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* Muncer finds in the Scriptures that titles of nobility and great estates are impious usurpations, contrary to the natural equality of the Faithful, and he invites his followers to examine if this is not the case. They examine into the matter, praise God, and then proceed, by fire and sword, to extirpate the impious, and possess themselves of their properties. Next comes a Dutch shoemaker, named Becold, better known as John of Leyden, who finds in the Scriptures, that established law are a permanent restriction on Christian liberty; and behold, the sapient son of Crispin flings away his tools, put himself at the head of a fanatical mob, surprises the town of Munster, proclaims himself King of Zion, and takes fourteen wives at once, asserting that polygamy is Christian liberty, and the privilege of the Saints. But to come nearer home, what do we find in England during the whole 17th century, but a series of absurdities, blasphemies, and excesses of all kinds, from the private

interpretation of the Scriptures? An immense number of fanatics appear, sometimes together and sometimes in succession, intoxicated with extravagant doctrines and mischievous passions, from the fierce ravings of Fox to the more methodical madness of Barclay; from the formidable fanaticism of Cromwell to the silly profanity of "Praise-God-Barebones." Piety, reason, and good sense, seem to have been extinguished on earth, and to be succeeded by an extravagant jargon, a religious frenzy, and a zeal without discretion. All quote Scripture, all have visions, ecstasies, and inspirations. Kings and priests are denounced as unfit to live, for priests are the ministers of Satan, and Kings are delegates of Her of Babylon. Enthusiasm for prayer, preaching, and the reading of the Sacred Books, was at this period at the highest point; everybody prayed, preached, and read, but nobody listened. The greatest atrocities were justified by the Scriptures; in the most ordinary transactions of life Scriptural language was made use of. National affairs and diplomatic correspondence were conducted in the phraseology of Holy Writ. Nor let us imagine that private judgment—that abundant source of fanaticism and illusion—has been dried up in the course of ages; it does not seem that it is yet exhausted, and Europe appears condemned still to hear the recital of visions, such as those of Baron Swedenborg in the inn in London, and we shall still see passports to heaven with three seals given out, like those of Joanna Southcote. The lesson to be learnt by this fatal experience is, that the Bible, without note or comment, was not intended to be read by rude and ignorant men. The majority of mankind must be content to trust to the instructions of others. The most important truths in medicine, in jurisprudence, in physics, in mathematics, must be received from those who drink at the fountain head. The same plan has been pursued in Christianity, and whenever it has been departed from society has been shaken to its foundations.

If then it be, as it is, in the words of Mr. Disraeli, already quoted, manifest by experience that the use of the Holy Scriptures in the vulgar tongue is the cause of more evil than good, because of the temerity of man, what wonder is it that the Church should prohibit that use when and where, and under what circumstances, she thinks

fit? She prohibited it at Toulouse, where it was the cause of the Albigenian heresy. She forbade it at Oxford; but expressly stated that the laity might read that version of the Scriptures which was approved of by the Bishop or Provincial Council. Pius IV. forbade it; but granted permission to those who had written authority to read it, from their bishop, provided also the version was truthful and orthodox. The Council of Trent denounces those only who seek to distort the meaning of the Sacred Text from that which the Church approves, and the Fathers teach. It also inveighs against printers and publishers who append to the text annotations and interpretations unwarranted by proper authority; and, in a word, employs all its energies in protecting the True Word from corruption or alteration at the hands of wicked and designing men. Whatever prohibitions were ever proclaimed had reference only to the translations in the vulgar tongue, because these conveyed the meaning of the original in an imperfect and obscure manner. The use of the Latin Vulgate was never forbidden, but strongly recommended to the faithful. Let no one, then, ever say that the laity are prevented from reading the Bible. I here denounce that statement as a falsehood, and I do so in the firm conviction that if I utter aught save the true doctrine of the Church, I shall myself be denounced as one unworthy to hold the commission of teacher in that Church. Yet, even in submission to the Church, must the Bible be read with care, for there are many parts of it which are not intended for the instruction of all, and may inflame the passions of some; and on this point I shall again quote the author of the "Curiosities of Literature," as one from the opposite camp, to prove that indiscriminate reading of the Bible may be dangerous to virtue. "As the Bible," he says, "in many parts consists merely of historical transactions, and as too many exhibit a detail of offensive ones, it has often occurred to the fathers of families, as well as to the Popes, to prohibit its general reading. Archbishop Tillotson formed a design of purifying the historical parts. Since some have given us a *Family Shakspere*, it is desirable that the same spirit would present us with a *Family Bible*."

The motives, then, which should bring us to the diligent study of Scripture may be summed up in this

much—it is the Word of God. Since it is such, we shall derive incomparably greater profit and pleasure from its perusal than from that of any other book, how excellent soever it may be. It is the best of all spiritual books—the bulwark of faith—the day-star of hope—a lamp to our feet—a treasure of heavenly and earthly wisdom. In the words of Geoffrey, the Monk of St. Barbara, “each sex and age finds here what is profitable: spiritual infancy, that whereby it may grow; youth, that which may strengthen it; age, that which may support it.” “The fairest productions of human wit,” says Horne, author of the Introduction to the Study of the Sacred Scriptures, “after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fragrancy; but these unfading plants of Paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful. Their bloom appears to be daily heightened, fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets extracted. He who hath once tasted their excellences will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them most.”

“On the tree of life eternal,
Man, let all thy hope be staid,
Which alone for ever vernal,
Bears a leaf that shall not fade.”

But it will be said, that supposing all I have stated to be true, the reading of the Bible is not countenanced in Ireland—that, in this country, where the Catholic clergy exercise so large an influence, the reading of it is not recommended, but is rather forbidden to the laity. To a Catholic clergyman this charge must come by surprise, as you may well imagine, from all I have previously said. But let us look to facts. In Dublin alone, one eminent publisher, Mr. Duffy, with the sanction of the Catholic Archbishops, published three editions of the Douay version within seven years, and disposed of 42,500 copies; and within that period, it is well established, that more than 100,000 copies were spread through Ireland. This was true up to the date of 1856. Since that time thirteen years have elapsed. Mr. Duffy has not relaxed his publishing energies; and we may, therefore, conclude that he has been the instrument of a still further circulation of the Sacred Scriptures, on a large scale, throughout this country. “In Belfast,” says Counsellor O’Hagan, now Lord

Chancellor, in his celebrated speech in defence of Father Petcherine, "during the episcopates of two dear and venerated friends of mine, one of whom has departed, leaving an illustrious memory, and one of whom still survives, his worthy successor, above 308,000 copies of the same version were printed and circulated at the instance of the Catholic Bishops." And not only at home do the Irish cherish their love for the Bible, but this love they carry with them abroad. I quote for you, on this subject, an extract from a discourse which I find published in the *New York Tablet* of the 2nd instant, a panegyric pronounced by a clergyman, the Rev. Mr. O'Farrell, upon the late James Sadlier, a distinguished Catholic publisher in that city. "Not only," he says, "through the vast territories of this great Republic, but through the British provinces, in Halifax, in Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto, and many other places, he brought to the very doors of Catholics the riches of the mind. And what were these works? The Holy Bible first of all, of which it is *impossible to calculate* the number of volumes which he caused to be distributed; and nothing gave him so much pleasure as to relate how he had been the means of taking the first English Bibles into many backward parts of the country. And he did this as a Catholic, and he was encouraged to do it by priests and bishops, for nothing is more false than the assertion that the Catholic Church is the enemy of the Bible. She is an enemy to nothing true or good; knowledge is prized by her as next to virtue; her doctors are canonized for their learning; she only fears learning, founded on pride and self-will, that leads away from God."

But in urging on you the study of the Sacred Scriptures, I would remind you that it has many strong claims upon our regard besides its sacred character. In a purely literary point of view, it is of infinite importance and utility to the scholar. Its style is simple, and therefore most excellent; its subjects are of the sublimest nature; in many parts it abounds with poetical descriptions, beauty of imagery, loftiness of conception, and language of musical rhythm marvellously well suited to the ideas. By careful perusal of the Bible, the writer or speaker may enrich his utterances with the happiest allusions, illustrations, and quotations, and impart to the most common-place subjects a character of loftiness by the reflected splendour of Scrip-

ture lore. One of the highest charms, for example, of the oratory of Bright, is the happy knack he possesses of illustrating his ideas by figures, or incidents drawn from the Sacred Writings; and we all remember the admirable effect of Lowe's peroration on the Irish Church Bill, when, comparing the Irish Church Establishment to the barren fig-tree, he cried out "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"

We are all familiar with the beautiful passage in Job, describing the war-horse, which, with your permission, I shall recite. "Wilt thou give strength to the horse, or clothe his neck with neighing? Wilt thou lift him up like the locusts? the glory of his nostrils is terror. He breaketh up the earth with his hoof, he pranceth boldly, he goeth forward to meet armed men. He despiseth fear, he turneth not his back to the sword. Above him shall the quiver rattle, the spear and shield shall glisten. Chasing and raging, he swalloweth the ground, neither doth he make account when the noise of the trumpet soundeth. When he heareth the trumpet, he saith ha, ha, he smelleth the battle afar off, the encouraging of the captains, and the shouting of the army."

Where splendour of thought and language so much abounds it is hard to fix on any one spot as brighter than the rest. Yet shall I ask your attention to what I have always considered as a passage peculiarly sublime, the beginning of the 103rd Psalm. "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord, my God, thou art exceedingly great. Thou hast put on praise and beauty: and are clothed with light as with a garment. Who stretchest out the heavens like a pavilion: who coverest the highest rooms thereof with water. Who makest the clouds thy chariot: who walkest upon the wings of the winds. Who makest thy angels spirits, and thy ministers a burning fire. Who hast founded the earth upon its own bases, it shall not be moved for ever and ever. The deep like a garment is its clothing: above the mountains shall the waters stand. At thy rebuke they shall flee: at the voice of thy thunder they shall fear. The mountains ascend, and the plains descend into the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound which they shall not pass over: neither shall they return to cover the earth. Thou sendest forth springs in the valley: between the midst of the hills the water shall

pass. All the beasts of the field shall drink: the wild asses shall expect in their thirst. Over them, the birds of the air shall dwell, from the midst of the rocks they shall give forth their voices." And again in a few words of the Prophet Baruch, how magnificently is described the obedience of creation to the words of the Almighty. "He sendeth forth light, and it goeth. He hath called it and it obeyeth Him with trembling. And the stars have given light in their watches, and rejoiced. They were called, and they said here we are: and with cheerfulness they have showed forth to Him that made them." But I am sure the memory of each reader can point to many passages, equally beautiful, which have had some peculiar charm for his own fancy.

Gentlemen, one of the highest aspirations of an educated mind is to study the lives of the great who flourished in the ages of the past: to trace them from the dawn of childhood, to follow them through the scenes in which their manhood figured, and contemplate the exploits by which they made their names immortal—by which they won the admiration of all mankind. When we have made our minds familiar with the history of those great men: when we almost realize their features, their stature, the tones of their voices—when we can bring before our mental vision the various places where they achieved some deed of everlasting renown; our next desire is to visit the countries where they lived, to stand on the spot where they were born, to behold the relics of the things which they touched, to view the fields where they fought, or the ruins of the palaces in which they reigned: to gaze on the walls within which once echoed the voice of the philosopher or the legislator, the poet or the orator: to inspect the works of their hands, the paintings, the sculpture, the books which they wrote, or the monuments which commemorate their greatness. Thus, who does not long to wander through the classic land of Greece, to pace the plain of Marathon, and traverse the pass of Thermopylæ? to stand amid the ruins of the Acropolis, and gaze on the waters of the Piræus? Who would not wander with delight over the ground where once stood Sparta, the city of the unvanquished brave; or through Corinth, once the seat of learning and refinement, which made it proverbial, even amongst the jealous dilet-

tanti of ancient Rome? And what is the secret of our delight? It is that, while roaming amid those scenes of ancient renown, in fancy we see the great men of old, we hear the thunders of their eloquence, or behold their heroism in the field, or on the sea. We live once again with the hearers of Pericles or Demosthenes—we see the Persian host on Marathon swept like a field of corn before the conquering reapers of Miltiades, and the millions of Xerxes scattered in sight of Salamis like chaff before the wind by the galleys of the Athenians. All this is a delight to the mind of the scholar, the man of taste; but in the pages of the Bible I find the record of the greatest man this world ever produced; and from them I conceive a longing to visit the land made sacred beyond all the countries of the world, by having once been honoured with the Divinity of His presence. From the Bible I learn the history of that land from the earliest dawn of creation. I am made familiar with the names of its cities and towns, its mountains, lakes, and rivers. From my childhood I have known them—they have been instilled into my ears, and imbued with my memory, as things most sacred to learn, to cherish, and revere. The fame of other lands I have also been taught; but dearer and more prized to me is the glory of Lebanon, than the fabled fame of Parnassus; and holier in my love and recollections are Thabor, Olivet, and Calvary, than Pelion, Ossa, or Olympus. Dearest of all rivers to me is Jordan, where He who saved me was baptized; and the brook that I love most to read of and most long to see, is that of Cedron, over which crossed my Saviour with tottering steps, on that fatal night, to the gloom and agony of Gethsemane. Nor am I singular in these loves of Scripture places, and scenes, and memories. No, they have engaged the interest of millions throughout the centuries that are past; and there have been times when outrages offered to them have convulsed all Europe to its very centre. Who has not heard of the Crusades? Of those vast expeditions, when hundreds and thousands of Christians, men and women, flocked from every civilized land to protect the holy places from the desecration of the ravager; and to behold the scenes where Jesus lived, and suffered, and died. The history of Him, read in the Sacred Book, awakened this noble enthusiasm, until to see the hills and valleys of Palestine became the all-absorbing ambition of

the Christian's heart. And to the same ennobling desire are we indebted for the valour and heroism that distinguished the Christian soldier in those "brave days of old"—for chivalry and magnanimity such as have immortalized a Godfrey de Bouillon, and a Richard Cœur de Lion, and enriched the literature of Europe with the real and romantic narration of their exploits. Truly, Palestine, thou art a land of benediction, a country honoured by the Most High above all the nations of the earth. Happy they who can visit thee ; who can wander over thy consecrated ground, and recall the hallowed memories of thy past ! For us who cannot do so, it only remains to mark with pleasure in our fancies, or to trace upon the map, the spots where stood Capharnaum, Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem ; to follow the windings of the Jordan, or stand in spirit beside the sea of Galilee ; to picture in our mind's eye, with the light of the sacred page, the stately cedars of Lebanon, the heights of Thabor, once irradiated with the beams of heaven's glory ; and Calvary, once bedewed with the Blood that rescued a world from perdition.

Such are the delights and advantages that flow from the reading of the Bible. To this fountain-head of knowledge every scholar may come, and from it he may bear away the sacred waters to invigorate the mind and cheer the soul. Theologian, preacher, ascetic, poet, orator, historian, philosopher, come hither and be enriched. Here is heavenly doctrine, here are burning words, here is the matter of meditation most sublime and profound ; here is the history of the world from its beginnings ; here are the laws of nature explained, man's origin described, and his destiny evolved : the clouds are scattered that enshroud the past, and the future beams with living light. Read, then, the Bible, as a Christian should read it, with submission to the interpretation of the Church—it is the choicest food of mind and soul, the Bread of life—the Word of God—the tree of True Knowledge, of which all who taste shall be wise unto salvation.

LECTURE

ON THE CHIVALRY OF THE MIDDLE AGES.¹

IN Europe, during the course of the middle ages—that is, from about the age of Charlemagne to about the age of Charles the Fifth—we discover the existence of an institution which had no prototype in the past, and which is more than likely to be without a parallel in the future—namely, the institution of chivalry. Assuming various features in the progressive stages of its growth, in its highest culmination it presents to us a body of mail-clad warriors scattered over every nation of the Continent, remarkable for unblemished honour in all the relations of life, courage almost superhuman in the field, ardent devotion to the interests of religion, and the purest and most refined reverence for woman.

At a period of undoubted barbarism, when every man had to study the profession of arms, in order to defend the property which his ancestors had acquired by the very questionable right of conquest; when the sources of enlightenment and moral instruction were rare, or inapplicable to the wants of millions; when, owing to the unsettled state of society, laws were either altogether inoperative, or arbitrarily enforced by half savage feudal barons; when mutual rapine and insult entailed incessant war, and fed the fire of wicked passions; in a word, when might was right, it was a matter of the highest moment that an institution should exist which professed itself the armed and relentless enemy of injustice and oppression, and the uncompromising champion of the glorious principles of the Christian religion. The salutary effects of chivalry on the civilization and manners of Europe are distinctly visible at the present day, and it cannot but be deeply interesting to trace the origin and progress of an institution

¹ Delivered in New York, 1871.

fraught with so much of real advantage to the best interests of the human race.

Apart from the Christian aspect of chivalry, there is scarcely a period of the world's history in which its principles, broadly viewed, have not received some striking illustration amongst civilized men. Thus the diminutive challenger of the Philistine giant, David, evinced a chivalrous character, by seeking to fight in a noble cause—the cause of God and his country—and by ambitioning the glory of defeating his enemy in a combat *a l'outrance*.

Among the Greeks we recognise many of the features of Christian chivalry, valour, obedience, love of woman, zeal for the gods, defiance of temptation, repentance after crime; but above all, indomitable courage. The shade of no coward ever glided amid the hallowed groves of Elysium, as the Christian Knight who quailed before the foe was pronounced the rejected of heaven, whom the very penance of the cloister was ineffectual to save. “But the most beautiful picture,” says Hallam, “that was ever portrayed of this character is the Achilles of Homer, the representative of chivalry in its most general form, with all its sincerity and unyielding rectitude, all its courtesies and munificence. Calmly indifferent to the cause in which he is engaged, and contemplating with a serious and unshaken look the premature death that awaits him, his heart only beats for glory and friendship.”

Amongst the ancient Germans, according to the testimony of Tacitus, and most probably amongst other European people, it was usual for young men, at a certain age, and generally after a trial of their prowess, to be formally invested with implements of war by which they acquired the military character, and were entitled to speak and act on matters of public moment. Proofs are not wanting to show that, in the time of Charlemagne, the sons of monarchs could not bear arms without this form of investiture, and, in the eleventh century, it was a general practice. Thus, according to William of Malmesbury, King Arthur knighted Athelstane, investing him with “a purple robe, a belt set with precious stones, a Saxon sword, and a gold scabbard.”

All these military forms, however, but imperfectly foreshadow the institution of chivalry such as we understand it; and it is only in the time of Charlemagne that we

discover the historical fact that gave birth and a name to this highest development of the warlike character. To an enlightened audience, such as I have the honour to address, it is hardly necessary for me to explain what is meant by the feudal system. But, for the clearness which I study in this lecture, I must briefly describe it. When a despot leads his battalions into an enemy's country, the lands that are won from the vanquished become the property of the conqueror, and swell the proportions of his previous dominions. Thus it was that almost all the nations of mid-Europe fell under the sway of the Romans, augmenting their vast empire, and adding new terrors to their name. But, when freemen voluntarily join the ranks of some adventurous soldier of fortune, and go forth, not for pay but for booty, the territories of the invaded are divided amongst all, and each victorious soldier becomes a proprietor of the soil. So it was with the northern tribes who invaded the Roman empire. They fought and won, and divided the land between them. It is a singular fact that the Eastern tribes who overran Europe at the same time, though differing from those of the North in language, character, and customs, acted upon the same principle. According to what standard the lands were divided no record exists to tell—there was no time for writing then—but the division was made, and the conquerors settled on their lands, and soon saw the necessity for entering into some general arrangement for protecting themselves against the rapacity of future invaders. The arrangement was, that each freeman who received a portion of the divided lands bound himself to appear in arms with certain of his followers, when called upon, against the enemies of the community. This military service was the condition on which he held his lands, and this aggregation of confederated landholders, of whom the chief was the king, was called the feudal system. Now, in the reign of Charlemagne, certain feudal tenants were bound to serve on horseback, equipped with a coat of mail. These were called *caballarii*, or horsemen, from the word *Caballus*, the Latin of a late period used to designate a horse. Hence we have in Italian, *cavaliere*; in Spanish, *caballero*; in French, *chevalier*; in English, *cavalier*. Need I remind my Celtic friends of the close resemblance between *capul* and *caballus*?

A soldier mounted on horseback, and enveloped in a coat of mail, wanted nothing more to enjoy the rank and qualities of knighthood, and thus the origin of that special character on the field of war may be justly traced to the reign of Charlemagne.

And yet this is not the chivalry which engages our attention ; for, after all, this was nothing more than the old prosaic trade of fighting through necessity, and for pay—it was, however, the germ of a future and a nobler chivalry ; for, in those days, when the machinery of war was imperfect, a warrior encased in armour and mounted on a mail-clad steed was a very formidable opponent ; his consciousness of superior strength and skill increased his confidence in his own powers ; and he gradually acquired that spirit of self-reliance, and love of adventure, which, when the knight became subsequently an independent soldier of fortune, and not one of the mere rank and file, burst forth into that glorious, I might say, that sublime character of bravery which never shrank from peril, and triumphed over every obstacle in its path.

The Crusaders gave to chivalry quite a new and exalted character, and moulded it into its last and most perfect proportions. All Europe was fired with enthusiasm to go and rescue the Holy Places from the impious grasp of the Saracens. A project so full of romance, proposed to peoples with whom religion and military renown were the noblest, as they were almost the only influences, met with a universal and generous response. All the rules of military service, as in accordance with the exigencies of the feudal system, were either forgotten or set aside for the occasion. Men thought not of pay—they longed for adventure, for glory, for the vague and nameless acquisitions which a soldier might win in a land famed for wealth and magnificence above all the nations of the earth. . . . When the Crusades were over, and the knights returned to Christendom, religion was still the principle that animated their breasts and fired their zeal. If they could fight the Saracens no more, if they could not save the Holy Places from the infidel, there was plenty of religious work at home to do. They could check the insolence of overgrown oppressors—they could rescue the helpless from captivity—they could protect or avenge women, orphans, and ecclesiastics, who could not bear arms in their own defence. To

redress wrongs and grievances became to them the highest acts of prowess and merit. Valour, humanity, courtesy, justice and honour, were the characteristics of chivalry; every person of noble birth coveted the honour—it was deemed a distinction superior to royalty itself, and monarchs were proud to receive it at the hands of private gentlemen.

There were three degrees in the chivalry of Europe, namely, Knights-banneret, Knights and Esquires. To belong to any one of these orders, it was almost always essential to be of noble or gentle birth. The *Knight-banneret* was he who, having served with great distinction in the wars, and won as his adherents many chivalrous brothers in arms, was able to bring to the field at least about fifty knights and esquires, with their respective "men-at-arms." These were, for each esquire, one or more horse-soldiers, armed with the cross-bow, or with the long-bow and axe. Several followers on foot completed the equipment. The crowning distinction of the Knight-banneret was that he did not fight under any other baron, but independently led his own soldiers to the field.

The second degree of chivalry was that of the *Knight*, simply so called. He was designated *Bas-Chevalier*, as inferior to the Knight-banneret. From *Bas-Chevalier* is supposed to come "Bachelor," as if the Knight were a bachelor for the honours of the Knight-banneret. It subsequently, however, came to be applied to the Esquire only in allusion to his being a bachelor for, or aspirant to, the honours of knighthood.

Gentle birth, as I have said, was essential to the knightly quality, chiefly because wealth was necessary to furnish the expenses of a knight, which were enormous, as he sought the most lavish magnificence in the equipment of himself, his horse, and his following. This tendency to sumptuous display was greatly promoted during the Crusades, when the knights beheld for the first time the splendour of Oriental luxury, and disdained not, despite their hatred of the infidel, to affect the pomp and emulate the gorgeous attire of their Saracenic foes. Thus Froissart tells us that when the French, in 1386, undertook an invasion of England, gold and silver were no more spared in the style of their equipment, than if they rained out of the clouds. Their ships were painted most gor-

geously, and decorated with their arms; their banners and pennons and standards were all of silk, so goodly, that it was a marvel to behold them; the masts of their ships were gilt with gold, and embellished with all manner of rare devices, so that the whole seemed to be a fleet of merry-making cruisers, rather than an armada destined for all the horrid purposes of war The only exception to gentle birth as a qualification for knighthood was prowess in arms; but then the conferred dignity *ipso facto* constituted the recipient a gentleman. The first tradesman that ever received the honour of knighthood in England was Sir William Walworth, Lord Mayor of London, who slew Wat Tyler. We also read of a tailor who was raised to the double dignity of a knight and gentleman by King Edward the Third, namely, Sir John Hawkwood, the hero of many a romance, who, after the conclusion of the king's wars in France, crossed the Alps into Italy, and headed the White or English adventurers, or Free Companions, as they were called, so famous in the Italian wars.

The third order of Chivalry was that of *Esquire*, in old French, *escuyer*, or shield-bearer; because, in the early stages of the office, it was the duty of the squire to bear the shield of the knight. In the full development, however, of chivalry, the squires were not shield-bearers, but efficient soldiers, inferior in rank to the knight, but superior to the men-at-arms. Many would aspire to the full honours of knighthood but for their poverty—it being a maxim in chivalry that it was better to be a good esquire than a poor knight. The poor squires lost nothing by their prudence, for they were entitled to lead their vassals into the field under a pennoncell, or small triangular streamer, just as the knight led his under a pennon, and the knight-banneret his under a banner.

For the sons of noblemen, at this period, there was open no profession save the Church and that of arms. Where there were many sons in a family, and the resources of the state were not sufficient to equip all for knighthood, the younger scions of the house betook themselves to the domain of some noble or wealthy relative or friend, where they graduated through all the ranks of military service, from the condition of a page upwards, and sought glory in the knightly retinue of the baron whom they served. Nor was this subservience by any means considered a degradation, as the

highest dignity to which any man could aspire was that of knighthood. It raised the fortunate possessor of the honour to the foremost rank in society, and placed him on a par with the wealthiest landholder in dress, in arms, and in title. Since the acquisition of so exalted a privilege was entirely owing to merit, the knight was esteemed more highly than the proudest baron, whose chiefest glory was his wide possessions: and those who were knights only by territorial right were ashamed to assert their titles until they had performed some distinguished feat of arms worthy of a martial name.

And now it is time that we should see the knight in full panoply, arrayed for the glorious work of war. We behold him, then, on horseback, and shall examine in detail the various parts of his equipment. First is his lance, his chief offensive weapon—the staff commonly formed of the ash tree, and the head of iron, chiefly selected from the mines of Poieton or Bordeaux. To the top of the lance is affixed the pennon, so called from the Latin word, *pannus*, a piece of cloth, the knight's ensign, generally made of silk, and marked with part of his heraldry, or, if he be a Crusader, with the cross. Two contending knights generally encountered each other with the lance, but many preferred the excitement and glory of a closer conflict, in which case recourse was had to the battle-axe. But the favourite weapon was a ponderous steel or iron hammer, called the maule or martel. This instrument, combining enormous weight with a sharp edge, hung from the saddle-bow, and was reserved for that stage of the conflict when skulls were to be opened. It was, however, regarded for the most part as an unknightly weapon, and the romance writers of the chivalric era always give their knight a lance, while the axe or martel is reserved for the rude fist of some ferocious giant.

But the sword was the characteristic weapon of the true chevalier, and round it were encircled all the warmest affections of his heart. It was his "good sword"—"his own good sword;" he gave it a name, it was his best and dearest friend, and was handed down as a sacred heirloom to his descendants. On it was engraven some moral sentence, or some incentive to valour. Its hilt, formed in the shape of a cross, served as a crucifix to stimulate his virtue, or to kneel before in some hour when religion made

a peculiarly touching appeal. Thus the illustrious Bayard, the knight "without fear and without reproach," after he had received his death wound, knelt before his sword, kissed its cross-handle, and employed it in his dying prayers as the most suggestive reminder of the Christian faith in the redemption. Spain was famous for its swords, for their peculiar temper and brilliancy, so far back as the time of Martial, the Latin poet. In later times, the blade of Toledo was considered perfection itself, and the swords of Julian del Roy of that city have been immortalized in the eulogy of Don Quixote. The most famous sword, perhaps, in all romance was that of King Arthur. Its name was Escalibert (corrupted into Caliburn), and its fame preceded Richard Cœur de Lion to the Holy Land. It is said he wore himself the trusty sword of Arthur, and that he subsequently presented it to Tancred, king of Sicily, according to the quaint lines of the poet—

"And Richard at this time gaff him a fair juelle,
The good sword Caliburne, which Arthur loved so well."

The sword of Charlemagne was called *Fusberta joyosa*, and the epithet of "joyous" applied to a sword will show us how, in the good old days of chevisance, war lost its horrid front, and appeared to those who loved it only in the aspect of pleasure and amusement.

Next in the furnishing of the knight came the shield, wide at the top for the protection of the body, and tapering towards the bottom, adorned with emblazonry of arms, and other ornaments of gold and silver, according to fancy or facility of expense. The body of the knight was encased in armour, which varied in style in the progress of centuries, according as experience suggested alterations or improvements. In very early times the skins of beasts were used for armour: but this was too primitive, and was replaced by chain armour, subsequently by mail, and finally by plate. But into this subject it would not be interesting to go, nor would it be easy in the course of a lecture. It will be sufficient for me, by way of illustrating the difficulty, to inform you that a certain Dr. Meyrick has written a huge work on armour, and that he classifies the various sorts of early *mail alone* into the "rusted, the scaled, the trellissed, the pourpointed, and the tegulated." It would

be almost as dangerous to face a knight fully armed as to encounter a subject like this.

The armour of the knight was often crossed by a scarf of silk embroidered by his lady-love. He also wore over his armour, when not in action, a large cloak, called sometimes a surcoat, at other times a cyclas or tabard. This garment was generally made of cloth, and, as elegance increased, of richer materials of cloth of gold or silver, of rich skins, furs, ermine, sables, miniver, and so on. From the colour and embellishments of this surcoat came the "coat of arms"—for knights were distinguished from each other in the field by the various aspects of this garment. When it was necessary to point out a certain knight in any chivalrous array, it was sufficient to say he wears a coat of or, argent, gules, sinople, sable, gris, ermine, or vert.

The knight's helmet may be said to complete his personal equipment; and thus, thoroughly cased up in impenetrable metal, the infliction of death appeared to be a matter of no small difficulty, for the only vulnerable points were the holes in the vizor for the purpose of breathing, which might be penetrated by a lance: but as knights in the charge always bent their heads almost to the horse's neck, this penetration was impossible. To meet this emergency, each knight carried what was called a "dagger of mercy," which he could insert between the harness-plates of his fallen enemy with fatal effect. It was called the dagger of mercy, because the rule of chivalry was, that death should not be inflicted on a fallen enemy if he cried mercy, and surrendered himself to the discretion of the victor.

As long as a mail-clad knight maintained his place on horseback, all was well for him; but, in the fierce shock of battle, many cavaliers were thrown from their horses, and few spectacles were more ludicrous than that which a battle-field presented, when some hundreds of knights lay prostrate on the ground, rolling about like enormous beetles, unable to gain a natural position, and forced to wait until the dagger of mercy was presented to their throats. In the year 1427, in a battle fought by the Milanese and Venetians, eight thousand knights, whose horses sank in a morass, all lay beneath their ponderous armour, unable to move, until the enemy came at leisure, and took them prisoners.

The description of the knight's equipage would be incomplete without some reference to his horse, his "good steed," as he loved to call him. A knight, himself of tolerably good weight, when fully accoutred, must have acquired a horse of no ordinary strength to carry him. And so it was. The Spanish horses were famed for strength. The favourite steed of William the Conqueror came from Spain. During the Crusades, the worth of Arabian horses was discovered. What they wanted in size they made up in spirit, and how much so ever the romance writers may have been prejudiced against the productions of *Heathennesse*, the Arabian horse was the constant subject of their praise. The steed of Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, better known as "The Cid," was very much celebrated in Spain. In gratitude for some favour conferred on him by Alfonso, King of Castile, the Knight wished to present to his majesty his favourite horse, and to induce the King to accept him, he showed his qualities. The scene is so well described by Lockhart, in one of his Spanish ballads, that I cannot help quoting it:—

"With that the Cid, clad as he was in mantle furred and wide,
On Bavioca vaulting, put the rowel in his side,
And up and down, and round and round, so fierce was his career,
Streamed, like a pennon in the wind, Ruy Diaz' miniver.

"And all that saw them praised them, they lauded man and horse
As matched well and rivalless for gallantry and force;
Ne'er had they looked on horseman might to this knight come near,
Nor on other charger worthy of such a cavalier.

"Thus to and fro a rushing, the fierce and furious steed,
He snapped in twain his hither rein—'God pity now the Cid.'
'God pity Diaz!' cried the Lords—but when they looked again,
They saw Ruy Diaz ruling him with a fragment of his rein;
They saw him proudly ruling—with gesture firm and calm,
Like a true lord commanding, and obeyed as by a lamb.

"And so they led him foaming and panting to the king,
But 'No,' said Don Alphonso, it were a shameful thing
That peerless Bavioca should ever be bestrid
By any mortal but Bivar, mount,—mount again, my Cid."

The war-horse was always armed—like the knight his master. His head, chest, and flanks were protected by mail, and his head was ornamented with a crest like the helmet of the knight. His bridle was generally very sumptuous, often of gold, and his neck was frequently

garnished with a circlet of bells, the sound of which was supposed to inspire the knight with confidence, and strike the enemy with terror.

We have traced the material panoply of the knight—his moral armour was no less formidable. Far superior to his lance was his indomitable courage, and the records of chivalry abound with instances where this virtue was exercised to a degree which clearly proves that “truth is stranger than fiction.” The knight was not content with the exhibition of ordinary courage: he showed a wondrous ingenuity in inventing plans for the display of extraordinary pluck and spirit. He would vow not to clip or comb his hair until he had accomplished some daring feat of arms: he would wear a chain on his arm or leg until he had fulfilled a vow to perform some exploit of peculiar difficulty: he would fight blindfold, or pinion one arm to his body, as we sometimes even in this unchivalric age see one boy challenge to fight another with his left hand or on his knees. In the reign of Edward III., King of England, a number of young knights bound one eye each with a silk ribbon, and vowed before the ladies and the peacock that they would not return from France until they had distinguished themselves by some martial exploit of peculiar daring. Yet, it was only young knights that conceived or executed those fantastic feats of chivalry. Experience, the universal teacher, did not throw away her lessons on the full-grown cavalier, and sageness became one of the virtues of his order. What Macbeth said of Banquo is applicable to the knight:—

“’Tis much he dares,
And to that dauntless temper of his mind
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety.”

Courtesy in private life and humanity in war were very beautiful characteristics of knighthood, for which it was, no doubt, indebted to the Christian religion. The prostrate foe never begged for his life in vain from the true knight. A knight without pity was said to be a knight without worship. The true son of chivalry never raised his lance against the common herd—it was unworthy of his highness. To such an extent was courtesy carried, that knights in conflict with each other frequently paused

to take breath, and to drink from some neighbouring stream. If one fell, the other helped him to rise and adjust his armour, and then the combat was renewed. No knight would ever yield to one of the "raskall rout;" it was a gross indignity to be overcome by one of low degree, and whenever so unwelcome an accident occurred, the vanquished knight had recourse to the ingenious but ludicrous device of knighting the victor, and then yielding his sword to one who had thus attained his own rank. Examples of this kind are abundant.

Fidelity to obligations was a noble characteristic of knighthood. Whatever the knight promised to do, he did, in spite of all obstacles. If taken captive, and released on promise that he would return on a certain day, with a certain sum for his ransom, he never failed. Treachery, theretofore a common resource among contending parties, was scouted from the lists, where honour alone was permitted to rule. "False," "perjured," "disloyal," "recreant," were epithets which a knight feared more than death itself. This elevating feeling of the mind softened the asperity with which prisoners of war had been previously treated, and it became a point of most punctilious honour to deal more favourably with a vanquished foe than with a friend or companion.

Another virtue of the knight was liberality. He learned to regard money as dross, for it added nothing to his honour or renown. All he could achieve was due to his valour. His arms and his horse were his only treasures. The minstrels celebrated his munificence, probably because they benefited by it. The passing pilgrim never begged in vain at the castle gate. Nor did this spirit of profusion feed on mere pride and vanity: the knight was highly sensitive to the influences of religion, and his detestation of avarice was no less founded on the ennobling basis of charity than it was on that magnanimity which aspired to crowns and kingdoms as a guerdon.

Humility also was a feature of the knightly character. He never praised himself, nor sought vain-glory for his achievements.

"And of his port as meek as is a maid,"

quoeth Chaucer, of his ideal knight. Indeed, gentleness and kindness and courtesy, in the highest degree, charac-

terised the votaries of chivalry ; and in the same nature were happily blended a modesty and sweetness almost womanlike, with a boldness and fierceness that brooked no insult and tolerated no wrong.

“ Preux chevalier, n'en doutez pas,
Doit ferir hault, et parler bas.”

which I think may be fairly translated :—

“ The prowest knight is he, I trow,
Who striketh high and speaketh low.”

As I am considering the Knight in his martial character, with a view to showing the influences of chivalry on the manners and civilization of Europe, it is unnecessary for me to follow him into private life ; to tell of his sports on the hunting field, and how he went forth hawking, accompanied by dames and maidens, to the merry sound of the bugle-horn. I need not tell how chess-playing became a most knightly accomplishment, as we might naturally suppose, from the martial aspect of the game ; and how the leisure hours in castle and baronial hall were cheered by the lay of minstrel and minnesinger—by the poetry of the troubadour and the romance of learned clerk—all breathing of love and war, of the duties and sports of chivalry. In all this there is food for the romantic mind ; and the voluminous works of fiction that glut our public libraries will satisfy the desires of the curious on this bewitching subject. We deal with facts stern as chivalry itself. We view the knight as truthful history describes him, and even in the faithful tracing of his character and deeds, we find sufficient to stimulate our most prying curiosity, and to excite our liveliest wonder and admiration.

The knight, such as I have described him, appears to be a most exalted character ; a champion of whom even Christianity may be proud ; one possessed of every virtue that could ennoble and adorn ; without fear and without reproach. And such, no doubt, was not only the ideal knight, but many a real son of chivalry ; for many practised to the full the virtues which chivalry claimed as its own. But, it must be admitted that, within the ranks of knighthood were many who were destitute of every moral virtue. One cavalier was known to boast that he had

burned a church and twenty-four monks, and its contents, although it was a law of chivalry never to raise hand against ecclesiastics ; while another, inflamed with chivalry and love, flung aside his rosary, and said that paradise was only fit for monks, and priests, and hermits ; but that, for his part, he preferred going to the devil ; for in his fiery kingdom he was sure to meet the gay and brilliant society of kings, knights, squires, minstrels, and jugglers, but above all, the mistress of his heart.

Next to the spirit of religion which inflamed the breast of the true knight was that devotion to the fair sex which we call gallantry—not precisely the passion of love, but a respectful admiration of womankind in general, a readiness to obey her behests, however extravagant, and to rescue her from danger, however threatening to her deliverer. But besides the respect for woman in general, each knight had some special mistress of his affections, some mundane goddess, before whom he worshipped, some idol to whom he offered the glory of his valour, and the trophies of his triumph. Religion and gallantry were the blended motives of his conduct. “God and my lady” was his war-cry, his constant thought, the incentives of his ambition, the beginning and end of his knightly existence. Under this absorbing influence no danger affrights him, no labour wearies, no obstacle retards. The warrior who fought like a lion on the plains of Palestine melts like wax at the name of the lady whom he loves, and he longs for the hour when, arriving at her castle-gate she may come forth to bid him welcome from the wars, and receive with smiles of approval the spoils he has won. Should some rival knight look too lovingly upon the idol of his heart, or hover with sinister design beneath her battlements, woe is him for his rashness ! The lioness robbed of her cubs is not more terrible ; the hurricane that sweeps the forest is less implacable in its wrath ; he must destroy his rival, or die. No doubt, like many other features of the knightly character, this spirit of gallantry has been grossly exaggerated by the romances of minstrels and troubadours, but it must have had a real type at some time, and when analyzed involves no contradiction. Nothing was more natural than that the northern invaders of southern Europe should have been men of violent passions, and that in every quarrel and dispute the sword should be the

arbiter, and strength of arm the only law; for society was yet unfashioned, and there was no moral power to restrain. Nothing, also, was more natural than that such men should have a lively sense of religion. She had dazzled their imaginations by the splendour of her churches and the pomp of her worship. She had astonished them by the virtues which she taught, by the sweetness and gentleness of her language, by the purity of her precepts, and by the lofty aims which she proposed for their ambition. They eagerly embraced her doctrine and her discipline; and the barbarian who had no law but his spear, and no other rule of conduct but the inspirations of his fiery soul, tamed his wrath and dignified his valour at the sublime dictation of the Christian faith. Christianity elevated woman from the degraded position she had held in the world: she became the equal of man, and in many respects his superior; the beauty of her person typified the charms of her mind; she became the moderator of man's passions, instead of being the slave. Around her was thrown a halo of poetry which to the vivid imagination of chivalry raised her to the dignity of a being more than human; the knight's love was no longer a sensual feeling—it was a respect, a veneration, a worship. Chivalry did not raise woman from her lowly position; Christianity raised her, and chivalry paid her that honour and respect with which it found her invested.

I have said that this spirit of gallantry has been exaggerated by the writers of romance; it has had its absurdities as well as its impieties. Thus we are amused by the account given by Cervantes of Don Quixote stationing himself in the middle of a high road, and calling on the merchants of Toledo who were bound to the silk fairs of Murcia, that he forbade them to pass until they acknowledged that there was not in the world a more beautiful damsel than the Empress of La Mancha, the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso. For the knights of chivalry were not content to fight and joust in honour of the ladies, but each knight was prepared to maintain at the point of his lance that his mistress surpassed all others in beauty. Another extravagance of gallantry was an amorous frenzy, that seized certain foolish young knights, who in the middle ages formed themselves into a society called the “penitents of love.”

They opposed themselves to nature in everything, on the principle that love can effect the strangest metamorphoses. During the violent heat of summer they wrapped themselves in furs, and sat before blazing fires, as if they were insensible to every warming influence when the fire of their love was absent. When winter came, they affected to be inflamed with the tender passion, and robed themselves in garments of slightest texture. Such a society could not last long. A few enthusiasts perished, and reason resumed her empire. There are many anecdotes to prove that the ladies were not ungrateful for the courtly attention they received in chivalric times. One will suffice. During the wars of the Guelphs and Ghibbelines, the Emperor Conrad laid siege to the town of Winnisberg in Germany, and, having exhausted the energy and patience of the garrison, refused all terms of capitulation. But, impelled by the generous spirit of knighthood, he permitted the women to depart with so much of their precious effects as they could themselves transport. The gates of the town were thrown open, and lo! forth marched a long procession of women, each bearing on her back a father, a husband, a brother or lover, amid the laughter and cheers of the victorious camp.

There are many features of chivalry on which it would be impossible to dwell at any length in the short course of a lecture, and to which, therefore, I can barely allude. Such, for example, was knight-errantry—an absurd excess of the chivalric character by which knights of too romantic a turn of mind, took the whole world for a kingdom, and constituted themselves therein the sole arbiters of right and wrong, referring every disputable point to the solemn decision of the sword. Their absurdities have been well shown up in the immortal lineaments, guise and conduct of the illustrious Don Quixote, the hero of Cervantes.

I should wish to dwell, were it possible, on the splendid spectacle of the tournament, on the trumpet-clang of the herald, the contending knights on their war-steeds entering the arena in presence of royal and noble spectators, bedecked with all the surroundings of baronial pomp and woman's beauty, and feudal pageantry; the cry of "Honour to the Sons of the Brave!" resounding from the lips of minstrels; the lances and pennons, and nodding crests, the combat, with all its variations of interest; the glory

of the victor and his reward. In this natural and elegant amusement of a martial age we discover the germs of much of our present civilization. No knight was permitted to contend who had blasphemed God, or offended the ladies, who had ever been guilty of ingratitude or dishonour, who had broken his word, or deserted his brother in arms in the hour of need. Kings and princes themselves longed to enter an arena where so much honour was at stake, and where so much glory might be won: they learned to esteem far more dearly the prize of a gallant chevalier than the pomp and pageantry of an ancestral crown.

I should wish—but it is not now possible—to trace the features of chivalry in the several countries of Europe, to dwell on the romantic exploits of Richard Cœur de Lion, and of that most chivalrous monarch whom the world has ever seen, Edward III. of England. I should wish to show how the imaginary glories of King Arthur's reign have been more than rivalled by the real glories of this Third Edward and his son, the Black Prince, and how the exploits of the fictitious Sir Tristram, and Sir Launcelot of the Lake, have been surpassed by the actual achievements of Sir Walter Manny and Sir John Chandos. The leading characteristic of English chivalry was a love of adventure; in France, it was distinguished for its gaiety; in the Spanish cavalier we discover the courage, the high honour, and pure religion of the European blended with the proud and lofty deportment, the fervid imagination and magnificent pomp and pageantry of the Asiatic, derived from association with the Moorish invaders of the country.

In Germany the knight was little more than an armed robber. *Er will Ritter an mir werden* is a German proverb; in Italy, chivalry never reached the dignity which it enjoyed in the other countries of Europe; and whatever of chivalric taste we discover in the Muse of Pulci and Ariosto must be traced to the effusions of minstrels wandering from France and Spain, chaunting of Charlemagne and his paladins, and inflaming the ardent imagination of dwellers by the Tiber and the Po.

At a certain period of the Middle Ages, about the time of the Crusades, we discover a new and peculiar phase of chivalry in the institution of what are known as the religious military orders, whose very name implies the strange combination of monk and soldier. Surely, nothing ap-

pears to us more anomalous than the union of the monastic state with the martial character ; and yet, every reader of history has heard of the Knights of the Temple, of St. John of Jerusalem, of St. James of Compostella, of St. Michael, St. Raymond, and others of equal religious nomenclature. And yet, strange as it may appear, there is no monstrosity in this combination : it was only conformable to the existing state of things : it was a strong remedy for great and threatening evils ; in a word, it was a great European necessity. It is no part of my task to trace for you the wondrous exploits of the military orders, which, dictated as they were by the inspirations of religion, and a heroism the loftiest and purest, make history read like romance. I merely wish to dwell for a moment on the origin and spirit of those famous institutions. The antagonism between the Crescent and the Cross was implacable and irreconcilable. It could only be propitiated, if not quenched, in blood. The powers of both were so evenly balanced that the claim of superiority could only be decided by a fierce and determined struggle. It became a question whether the disciples of Mahomet should be permitted to overrun Europe, or be checked by an European levy *en masse* at the shores of Asia. The problem was solved by the invention and success of the Crusades ; the rapacity and ambition of the Mussulmans were restrained, and the civilization of Europe was promptly and vigorously promoted. Europe, in terror of being invaded from the East, recovered her tranquillity and independence ; the military spirit was intensified and strengthened amongst the nations of Christendom—a spirit of fraternity sprung up amongst them, while thus engaged in a common cause—a spirit that banded them together for mutual defence, and laid the foundations for what is now called the balance of power—the greatest security for the peace and integrity of Europe ; the human mind became gradually developed by observation, and travel, and mutual intercourse ; the state of feudal vassals was improved, and feudality itself became impotent and effete ; navies were created, and commerce and manufactures were encouraged : so that society received from the Crusades a most powerful and beneficial propulsion in the career of civilization. How is this to be accounted for ? Was it that statesmen and philosophers, and heads of religion,

calculated or foresaw those wondrous results? By no means: for none could reckon on the success or failure of these vast expeditions. And thus, the less we detect human foresight or agency, the more must we attribute those magnificent results to the operation of an All-wise Providence, and to the instincts which it implants in the breasts of men for the execution of its designs. In a word, the Church was, as it were, unconsciously, in the fulfilment of her mission, covering with her ægis, and animating with her breath, the civilization of Europe. And so arose the Crusades. For there is in the Church a strong tendency to embody ideas into institutions. An idea arose that the Holy Land must be rescued from the infidel: it is a grand, a poetic, a holy, an heroic thought: it is taken up with a fervour, a religious zeal, unparalleled in history; the mind of Christian Europe is suddenly inflamed with this insatiable desire; the work must be done by force of arms; blood must be shed; the Saracen must be slaughtered, but slaughtered in the cause of God. Here we discover that strange combination to which I have alluded—the mildness of religion arrayed in the panoply of war—the gentleness of the dove fused in the same breasts with the fierceness of the lion. This idea, of religion clothing herself in arms—this idea, so important, so necessary for the promotion of God's glory, the Church takes up, and embodies in the institution of the religious military orders. Under the coat of mail, and its formidable plates, beats a heart burning with zeal for the religion of Christ—a heart that would freely renounce all worldly wealth—nay, that would freely shed its very life-blood in that glorious cause. These valiant champions now assemble in the Church for prayer, meek votaries of the cloister—and now, athirst for war and glory, go forth and do battle with the Saracen. Yes, in history there is no event so colossal as the Crusades; and we search in vain for an institution so generous as the religious military orders. "In the Crusades," says Balmer, "we see numberless nations arise, march across deserts, bury themselves in countries with which they are unacquainted, and expose themselves to all the rigours of seasons and climates. And for what purpose? To deliver a tomb! Grand and immortal movement, where hundreds of nations advance to certain death, not in pur-

suit of a miserable self-interest—not to find an abode in milder or more fertile countries—not from an ardent desire to obtain for themselves earthly advantages ; but, inspired only by a religious idea, by a jealous desire to possess the tomb of Him who expired on the cross for the salvation of mankind ! When compared with this, what becomes of the lofty deeds of the Greeks, as chaunted by Homer ? “ Greece rises to avenge an injured husband ; Europe to redeem the sepulchre of a God ” (Europ. Civil., chap. 42).

My task is almost done. It only remains for me to glance at the effects of chivalry on the general civilization of Europe, such as it is at the present day, Edmund Burke, that great philosopher of the last century, deplored the fact that the age of chivalry was gone. Gone, no doubt, is chivalry such as we have contemplated it, namely, as an institution. In the words of the poet :—

“ The knights are dust,
And their good swords are rust,
Their souls are with the Saints, we trust.”

In Burke’s antipathy to the French Revolutionists, he seems to have felt too sensitively the departure of chivalric sentiments from the breast of Europe, for he writes like one who inscribes an epitaph on the monument of the chivalric era. “ The age,” he says, “ of sophisters, economists and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex—that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom—the unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprize is gone. It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage, while it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness.”

This, I fear, is too bitter a lament over the departed genius of chivalry : for, by a kind of moral metempsychosis, in the person of the gentleman of the present day

we discover, with some slight alterations, the soul of the medieval knight; and the society of that past age was not more strongly characterized by the graces of knighthood than this is by the influence of gentlemanly manners. The virtues of the gentleman, who has succeeded to the knight, are summed up by Hallam, when he says, "A jealous sense of honour, less romantic, but equally elevated, a ceremonious gallantry and politeness, a strictness of devotional observances, a high pride of birth, and a feeling of independence upon any sovereign for the dignity it gave, a sympathy for martial honour, though more subdued by civil habits, are the lineaments which prove an indisputable descent." "Time," he adds, "has effaced much also of this gentlemanly, as it did before of the chivalrous character. From the latter part of the seventeenth century, its vigour and purity have undergone a tacit decay, and yielded, perhaps, in every country to increasing commercial wealth, more diffused instruction, the spirit of general liberty in some, and of servile obsequiousness in others, the modes of life in great cities, and the levelling customs of social intercourse."

But chivalry had a wider and far more important influence on European manners than this. It not only softened the ferocity of the human mind in its day, but it contributed to polish and civilize the whole continent. It paved the way for the diffusion of knowledge, and the extension of commerce. By the courtesy and gentleness which were its essence, it caused nations to have confidence in the honour and integrity of each other, and thus the interests of commerce were promoted. It banished rudeness and vulgarity, and thus disposed the human mind for reflection which produces knowledge. But, strange as it may seem, that commerce, and that spread of learning which chivalry begat, were the causes of chivalry's own ruin: for commercial intercourse banished that ferocity and injustice which it was the mission of chivalry to correct and chastise, and the diffusion of learning showed up the absurdity and extravagance of many chivalric customs to which it adhered with a kind of superstitious affection. Thus, the direct influence of chivalry is scarcely felt at the present day; but we perceive its influence on our manners and refinement through those channels of commerce and knowledge created by its mildness in an age of barbarism.

And to what was all this mainly owing? No doubt, to the inspiring influence of the Christian religion, which was the life and soul of chivalry. The savage Gothic adventurer, roaming abroad in search of plunder, or gone forth on a mission of revenge, was a mere soldier of rapine and ambition, until the gentle genius of the new religion taught him to couch his lance for objects of defence and protection, as well as those of hostility. We have seen him the friend of the widow and the orphan, and of all who suffered from injustice and oppression. No longer thirsting for the blood of a foe to quench the fire of his wrath, he learned to spare even a fallen antagonist, taught by that sacred spirit which even in the face of an enemy discovers a brother. Hence the amenities and courtesies, of which we have already said so much, imparted by nation to nation, and exercising on the minds of men an influence universally beneficent. Many knights, as we have seen, were not influenced by those ennobling motives; but that was not the fault of the Christian religion. Even in this unchivalric age the angelic spirit of Christianity spreads its genial wings over Europe, and invites men to be up and doing as of old. And all hear the voice, and many proclaim their Christian feeling. And yet, perhaps, in no barbarous region that ever spread its bosom to the sun, have so many revolting crimes been committed as in nations blessed with the light of Gospel truth. Does this detract from the beauty, the majesty, the loveliness of the Christian religion? Far from it. They who act in this spirit only disgrace the religion they profess. There is not—there never was, nor can there be conceived a more glorious type of man than the true Christian; he who acts in strict conformity with the principles of Him after whose name he calls himself. He is the true knight of modern society, the enemy of barbarism, and rudeness, and hatred; the friend of all mankind, no matter of what country, clime, or creed. Yes: the more Christian a man is, the more is he the gentleman; and if we would derive any real advantage from the consideration of this subject, we would do so by striving to emulate in our moral achievements the physical prowess of the knights of old, and thus proving that, so far from the era of true chivalry being past, we had only arrived at its golden age.

LECTURE

ON THE DANGER OF SUPERFICIAL KNOWLEDGE. ¹

GENTLEMEN,—This evening we close the first session of our debating guild. We commenced with the nervous apprehensions that always attend an experiment; but taking a retrospect of our career, such as it has been, we enjoy the gratifying conviction that, while our fears have been dissipated, our hopes have been more than fulfilled. We have discussed a variety of subjects, all of peculiar importance of their kind; and in the treatment of these subjects much ability has been displayed, and a large amount of knowledge has been acquired. I am bound to add that, throughout the session, a tone of good temper has been manifested which could scarcely be expected from the warm-hearted Celt under the trying test of controversy. This is something to be proud of. Good temper is a characteristic of nature's "gentleman," and is always the companion of him who walks abroad in honest search for truth. It struck me also that many of our debaters evinced a logical precision of argumentation which is seldom found except with those who have had the advantage of a collegiate education. This too is creditable, for logical reasoning without high cultivation indicates native talent combined with honourable industry. But, gentlemen, here my eulogy ceases, and I begin to point out our shortcomings. These, I must say, appear to me to be very few, and indeed I believe they are common to all debating societies composed of young men. I shall only allude to two prominent faults—those are, that want of moral courage which forces the great body of members to remain silent; and a superficiality of knowledge amongst many who have spoken. On the first point I shall say only a little, but the substance of my discourse shall be mainly directed to the second.

¹ Delivered before the Young Men's Society, Cork, May 7, 1869.

Bashfulness is in boyhood a very pretty and very interesting feature of character. Modesty, we are told, is a quality that highly adorns a woman. Even in the sterner sex, it is a highly commendable characteristic. But modesty is quite compatible with courage. The youthful David confronted the Philistine giant with modesty, and in his courage he slew him. It does, no doubt, require some courage to rise for the first time to one's legs, and make a speech even of very brief duration. But he who only stands on the shore will never be a swimmer. He must dash into the sea and wrestle with the waves, and gasp and pant in the hard struggle, if he would conquer the difficulties that beset him—if he would experience the joy of being borne on the ocean's breast "like a bubble onward." So, he who would win the pleasure and the pride of launching forth into language bold, vigorous, and flowing, quickened by thought, fervid with feeling, brilliant with imagery, swelling around him by some secret magic which he owns, but of whose operation he is unconscious, until he is borne along irresistibly by the agile flood of his own creation, must encounter the task with indomitable courage, with hard trial and frequent discomfiture, but above all with that dogged perseverance which alone secures success. To many, despite their industry, supreme excellence is denied, because nature has placed before them insuperable obstacles, or has fitted them for eminence in some other field of intellect. But to all, in the act of speaking, moderate and sufficient success is attainable. He is very much to be envied who attires his thoughts in language simply correct and chaste; who, without moving the passions, convinces the understanding, and who diffuses around him the priceless blessing of knowledge as best he may. Without moral courage, first to try, and then to practise, you debar yourself from the possession of a privilege by which you may improve and delight your fellow-man, and receive as your guerdon the pleasing consciousness of having done some good to the great brotherhood of humanity, by imparting to them the products of your own intellectual growth.

The modest man is always postponing the moment of trial; and it too frequently happens that, having allowed many splendid opportunities to pass away, he finds himself like a Crusoe, stranded apparently beyond release, on the

shores of taciturnity. This bashful postponement of the first attempt might have done very well in the ages of patriarchal longevity, when boys of a hundred and thereabouts were still tied to their mother's apron-strings, and the mind might fairly spend a couple of centuries in girding itself for the contest ; but in those days, when human life has been contracted to such narrow limits, it is a painful thing for a man to discover that he has quietly drifted into sixty, and has not yet found out what he is good for.

Human nature being so very various, we have degrees of modesty and degrees of courage. As there is a modesty which wraps itself in perpetual silence, so there is a courage which urges its possessor forward on every occasion ; which arrays him in a panoply of words, without the enduring stuff of thought—which impels him dashing into the lists, where he flourishes about with spirit and vigour, dismaying his antagonists for a moment by the suspicious singularity of his movements, until they discern his true calibre, which is emptiness, and at length some “preux chevalier,” with dexterous tilt, dislodges him from the saddle, and sends him sprawling in the dust of the arena. Gentlemen, we must avoid extremes in all things ; we must keep clear of garrulous audacity, as well as stammering sheepishness. The medium is to speak only what you feel, what you think, what you know ; to speak not for self-glorification, but for the purpose either of giving knowledge or receiving it. And this brings me to the main point on which I have resolved to address you—namely, the dangers of superficial knowledge. By superficial knowledge I mean, as the words imply, knowing something only by its appearance, knowing only its features and not sounding its depths, knowing it partially, not thoroughly. When a man of superficial knowledge enters into an argument, see the result. He can impart very little information, for he has it not ; his views will be confused and illogical, for he argues to the whole, which he does not know, to the part, which he does know ; he cannot understand his adversary, who deals at large on the question, and presupposes a good deal known which it is not necessary to explain. Should he contend with one like himself, we have re-enacted the story of the parti-coloured shield, one knight pronouncing it black, the other as strongly asserting it is white, both rushing into hostile encounter

to settle the disputed point, and finding, when too late, that one side was black and the other white, that both were wrong, and that their blood would not have flowed but for their superficial knowledge of the shield.

See the superficial man in practical life. It is here, indeed, we discern the real dangers of partial knowledge. Who can calculate the injuries to society from the physician who is not thoroughly acquainted with the learning of his profession? How many diseases will he intensify by his unskilful treatment, when he might have eradicated them on his first visit? How many lives will be sacrificed at the altar of ignorance? The half-educated lawyer is generally dangerous only to himself, for when he has victimized a few clients, there comes an end to his practice. But we are not dealing with professional knowledge. Our consideration is confined to the knowledge of subjects derived from general reading, and to the defects in literary culture entailed by superficial study.

“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.”

One of the greatest dangers of scanty knowledge is its effects on the vanity of man. This vanity is one of the greatest obstacles to human perfection; and it is peculiarly the weakness of sciologists, that is, of those whose knowledge of things is only superficial. There is a class of men who love to hear themselves talk, who will venture observation on any subject whatever that may turn up in conversations, who would burst if they were silent, and to whom the simple confession, “I don’t know,” would be an intolerable humiliation. Because they have plucked some flowers in the gardens of literature, they discourse with freedom on the whole anthology of science; because they have bathed in some creeks of knowledge, they proceed like another Canute to command the waters of the “vasty deep.” The wonder is, how they find words to clothe their inanities—how they can throw so much shadow without substance; how such caterpillars can appear in all the gaudy plumage of the butterfly. They make up in high-sounding words for the lack of sense—they blind by a glare when they should enlighten by a mild radiance—they overwhelm their hearers in a flood, when they should bear them onward in a calm and smoothly flowing tide. We are all familiar with the character and style of the pedagogue—the ridi-

culous pedant—his “words of learned length and thundering sound.” This knowledge is scanty and incoherent,—it is, however, greater than the knowledge of his audience—he goes to his work like a conjuror. In his efforts to construct a fabric out of his spare materials, he puts in more words than thoughts, more mortar than stone, cleverly deceiving the simple spectators, who, when he has done, regard the edifice he has constructed with open-mouthed admiration ; because, as it looks well to the eye they deem it sound and perfect—they behold the architect in speechless amazement.

“Still they gaze, and more their wonder grows
How one small head can carry all he knows.”

Those vain talkers who discourse on everything generally have a great contempt for such as seldom speak, and whose language is destitute of ornament ; whereas the latter should rather command our admiration, speaking only when they have really something solid to say, and then saying it in language where we trace more the fire and vigour of nature than the fascinating embellishments of art. There is a French proverb which says that “speaking is silver, but silence is gold.” Far better is it to be silent altogether, than to babble empty nonsense.

One main resource by which sciolists gratify their vanity is to make frequent allusion to authors whose names are seldom mentioned even by the learned, and whose authority, therefore, no one can question. When we hear a man quoting a passage from some obscure Greek or Latin or Mediæval writer, whose name we may have heard once or twice in our lives, or perhaps not at all, we are tempted to think that he must be a very industrious reader, and a very profound scholar, who is not content, like the common herd, to travel in the beaten paths of literature, but to strike, as if for pastime, into the lanes and by-lanes of knowledge. “For instance,” says Sidney Smith, “it is very common to quote Shakspeare ; but it makes a sort of stare to quote Massinger. I have very little credit for being well acquainted with Virgil ; but if I quote Silius Italicus, I may stand some chance of being reckoned a great scholar. In short, whoever wishes to strike out of the great road, and to make a short cut to fame, let him

neglect Homer, and Virgil, and Horace, and Ariosto, and Milton, and, instead of these, read and talk of Fracastorius, Sannazarius, Lorenzini, Pastorini, and the thirty-six primary sonneteers of Bettinelli :—let him neglect everything which the suffrage of ages has made venerable and grand, and dig out of their graves a set of decayed scribblers whom the silent verdict of the public has fairly condemned to everlasting oblivion. If he complains of the injustice with which they have been treated, and call for a new trial with loud and importunate clamour, though I am afraid he will not make much progress in the estimation of men of sense, he will be sure to make some noise in the crowd, and to be dubbed a man of very curious and extraordinary erudition.

In a word, the great mistake those would-be scholars commit, is that they prize more the quantity and diversity of knowledge than the use they can make of the knowledge they possess. A little knowledge, full and accurate, is always more valuable for practical purposes than any amount of superficial information on general topics. People talk of the *spread* of knowledge. Yes, knowledge is spread, but it is so shallow, so thin, that it only serves to reveal the mass of ignorance lying beneath. Books are read—perhaps never in such numbers and profusion—but they are hastily skimmed over; they are briefly tasted, when they should be well chewed and digested. The scholar should seek thoroughness above all things in the acquisition of knowledge. To be half-learned is not to be learned at all. Those scantily-informed general scholars are compared to a sort of pocket-knife which some people carry about with them, which, in addition to a common knife contains a file, a chisel, a saw, a gimlet, a screw-driver, and a pair of scissors, but all so diminutive that the moment they are needed for use they are found to be useless.

Men, for the most part, reason on things according to the extent of the knowledge they possess. The old man who has amassed the experiences of a life-time can discourse with greater force and more truth on human nature, its tendencies, wants, desires, and weaknesses, than the stripling whose acquaintance with his kind is limited to the walls of a school-room or the lists of the play-ground. And yet we find that the budding youth puts forward his

views on most subjects with a confidence, a flippancy, and a pertinaciousness, whose best answer is the silent contempt of conscious knowledge. The sage who listens to the dogmatism of boyhood shrugs his shoulders and says within himself, "Poor lad, how very ignorant he is, but he will learn by-and-bye." A young tourist, who spends a month on the continent, travels over a few thousand miles surveying nature from the windows of a railway carriage, and contemplating humanity in parks and public promenades. He spends a day or two in some town, which he soon exchanges for another some hundred miles away. Yet, when he comes back he will inform you of the various habits, laws, fashions, peculiarities of the several nations of Europe, until some credulous and uninformed listener will believe that he is a marvellously clever young man, ethnologist, geographer, politician, historian, rolled into one. Yet all the while, he is perfectly ignorant of all he pretends to know, and would have been far more sensible if he had remained at home, and not have made so dangerous an accession to the food of his vanity. But he who travels only through one country, or a part of it, and sets himself to study in sober earnestness the character of the people, the antiquities, the laws, the social habits prevailing amongst them, will have derived much useful knowledge to aid his reasoning powers on many important subjects.

Men of superficial knowledge are in the habit of using frequently certain terms of the very meaning of which they are ignorant, but which they take as conveying some common and irrefutable axiom. But when you come to ask them the meaning of these words you are generally rewarded by an exhibition of bad temper rather than by the information you so pertinently seek.

People should always understand well what they say, otherwise error will inevitably creep in. Thus, how many are there who will tell you what patriotism really is; what is the meaning of such phrases as the rights of man—an age of progress—liberty as contradistinguished from license—the welfare of the people—the people the source of power—the freedom of the press, and numberless other high-sounding but delusive expressions, which all have their own meaning, but which are very frequently misunderstood. Building your theory on a false basis, your whole fabric tumbles to the ground. There, indeed,

"a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Many serious mistakes have been made, and many crimes committed, and many souls, as well as bodies, have been ruined because people pinned their faith to certain propositions, viewed in their own light, and viewed falsely. Whence have schisms and heresies ever arisen in the Catholic Church, but because men asserted certain propositions to be true which were really false—propositions which they were too ignorant, too vain, or too stupid, to understand? Mr. Hepworth Dixon, in a work entitled "Spiritual Wives," reveals to us the existence of a moral pestilence too gross to be specified, as existing in certain parts of America, because some scriptural sciolist, whose perceptions of truth were, no doubt, stimulated by the worst of passions, falsely interpreted a phrase which tells us that amongst the Christians all things were common. The only convincing argument for immoral sophists of this kind is the *argumentum ad baculum*, a sound drubbing with an Irish blackthorn.

It is incredible what mischief may be wrought by a man of superficial learning, should he unhappily get full scope for the exercise of his dangerous talents. Take for example one of those who are described as demagogues—men who, by an enthusiasm, sincere or feigned, a vivid imagination, impassioned speech and gesture, but with little knowledge of history, political economy, or human nature, sway the feelings of a multitude, and incite them to the adoption of some course for the improvement of their condition. To move a people by legitimate means for the attainment of a legitimate object is a noble privilege, the exercise of which has for many men the reward of an imperishable remembrance, and the undying gratitude of a nation. But he must be indeed a very bold, a very wicked, or a very stupid man, who, conscious of his superficial knowledge, comes forward for the purpose of directing his fellow-men in the road they should pursue for the recovery of their political rights. He may be well-intentioned; but good intentions will not save a man or a nation from ruin. The mass of the people are for the most part ignorant; many are poor; and therefore all are only too ready to hear, and too eager to follow, one who will lead them to a contest in which they can lose nothing, and may gain much. Statesmen, honest, grave,

and learned—trained to the work of government, and controlling a people as a skilful rider would control a horse, are always puzzled and perplexed by popular complaints, and strain every intellectual energy to allay unexpected commotions, and solve the difficulties that arise. They look to history for precedents; they consult as well for the dignity of the State as the welfare of the people; they take care that, in satisfying the claims of some, they do not infringe on the rights of others; they consider how far it is prudent to punish or to forgive the ringleaders in lawless outbreaks on such occasions; in a word, they are learned enough to be wise—they are thoughtful to be considerate—they are slow to decide, and resolute to act; and the wisdom of their conduct is generally evinced in the satisfaction of the people, and the preservation of the public peace. But the poor flip-pant demagogue knows no discretion of this kind; he mangles history, or else misrepresents it; he gives distorted views of precedents, and prescribes a course of action suited to data quite different from those in hand; in high-sounding declamation he rings the changes on bye-words of patriotism, proverbs concerning popular rights, and governmental tyranny; forsaking the ground of legitimate rhetoric, with whose rules he is probably unacquainted, he stirs the passions of the people—the ever inflammable multitude—and provokes them to deeds of sedition and revolt, that generally result only in an aggravation of the yoke they sought in their folly to shake off.

Another very dangerous character in society is the half-informed theologian. He is generally fond of controversy; for, according to the adage, “fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” This species of sciolist is all the more dangerous because he is honest, and sincerely desires to make converts to his creed. But, owing to his imperfect knowledge of his subject, he is often driven to a corner by a better informed adversary, he exposes his own ignorance, and frequently ascribes doctrines and practices to his co-religionists that have no foundation except in his own lively imaginings. He thus injures the cause which he is anxious to defend, and confirms the errors which he is anxious to remove. The consequence almost always is, that the beaten controversialist, mortified by his discomfiture, flies into a passion,

and flagrantly violates the mild spirit of that religion of which he had set himself up as a champion. Indeed, on many grounds, religious controversy had always better be avoided; for, besides the bad feeling it creates on both sides, it never produces conviction. Nor is this to be wondered at, for how can we expect that the feelings and convictions to which a man has been used from the earliest dawn of his reason, and which he cherishes as fondly as life itself, could, by one violent and sudden shock, be wrenched from his mind, and a new creed be at once implanted in their stead? Want of a proper understanding of religious differences leads many people astray in their notions of each other. Before we condemn a person for holding such and such opinions, whether on religion or any other subject, we should satisfy ourselves of two things. First, whether he really does profess those opinions; and, secondly, whether those opinions are in truth deserving of reprobation.

A vast deal of the persecution and misery to which this country has been for centuries subjected, though no doubt mainly owing to unceasing cruelty and rapacious greed for the property of our forefathers, was nevertheless largely attributable to a scanty acquaintance with the dogmas of the popular religious creed. The Catholics of the country were supposed to hold the most repulsive and abominable doctrines. They were called "Papists," because it was thought that they obeyed the Pope to the detriment of their allegiance to the Crown. They were accused of believing that no faith was to be kept with heretics; that by virtue of indulgences license was given to commit sin—that oaths and promises could be broken for the good of the Church—that heretical princes might be deposed and assassinated: with much more equally shocking. I allude to these misconceptions which, no doubt, existed in the minds of many learned and conscientious men, because I consider them quite within the scope of my subject, as illustrating the dangers of superficial knowledge. But the people vindicated themselves and their doctrines, by a patient endurance of persecutions for the cause of truth. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.* The truth has triumphed. The scales are falling from the eyes of the English people. The Catholic Irishman is no longer regarded as a monster, but all candid observers admit that he is at least the intel-

lectual equal, while he is certainly the moral and religious superior of the Englishman, no matter of what religious creed.

I shall now proceed to point out the remedies which suggest themselves to my mind as the most efficacious for the cure of this intellectual malady, called superficial knowledge.

The first remedy I would propose is an intense love of truth for its own sake; seek to acquire knowledge, because knowledge is good, it is God-given, it is a great power in the hands of man, it is a source of true and lasting pleasure.

Nothing stands so much in the way of him who is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, as that vanity to which I have alluded. "Knowledge," we are told by the sacred writer, "puffeth up;" and surely, if the wisest man that ever lived was still ignorant, considering the vast domains of wisdom yet unexplored, how contemptible is the pride of him who knows but little of anything! How can he who has barely gazed at the luminous wonders of the firmament by night pretend to discourse on the nature and mysterious operations of those heavenly bodies? So, also, how can he who has only dabbled in books, skimmed them over, and scarcely caught their meaning, presume to think that he can enlighten his fellow-men on the philosophy of history, the secrets of science, the wonders of nature and art, or the thousand questions that arise in literary discussion? The weakness and folly of him who exhibits himself thus are so painful that they ought to provoke the rebuke of pity, rather than excite the mirth of ridicule. This is the pride which the poet styles "the never-failing vice of fools." In very young men it is to a great extent pardonable, because youth is ambitious, short-sighted, and vain-glorious—experience has not yet enlightened or corrected it. The young student is but a child learning to walk in the paths of literature, and if he thinks he can run before he can learn the surer mode of progression, we do not grudge him the childish fancy; if he stumble, and rise from the ground with a bloody nose, we feel no surprise, but we tender our regrets, enjoying at the same time an inner complacent consciousness that a bloody nose now and then is the very best lesson in such a case. Some persons are of opinion that debating societies have a per-

icious influence on the intellectual development of young men. They say that young debaters, especially those who are naturally fluent, take great pleasure in hearing themselves talk; that when they have succeeded in speaking glibly for half-an-hour on various occasions, they are satisfied that they have become proficient in the art of debate, while they have, all through, neglected the pursuit of knowledge which ought to be the great substratum of their orations. I know not how far this opinion may be correct. It is sufficient for me to warn my hearers against the notion that speaking well is everything. There are men to whom speech comes, as it were, spontaneously; to them rounded, polished periods are little or no trouble; but this class of speakers are too often only performers, as the "sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal." The words are coined by natural talent, and uttered by the lips, but the mint has not been supplied from the storehouse of the brain. He, then, who would be well grounded in knowledge, must, I repeat, love it for its own sake. He must chase away the rival motive of self-glorification; he must dispel this cloud of vanity which obscures the sunshine of truth—

"If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon him with resistless day."

He must leave the consideration of self, except as far as regards his own self-improvement, completely out of the question, and seek to discover his shortcomings by every means in his power—

"Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,
Make use of every friend—and every foe."

When he has enlarged the store of his knowledge he will gradually see how little ground there was for his empty self-esteem, and how much better it is to be ignorant altogether than to have caught only vague glimpses of the truth—

"Drink deep, or taste not of the Pierian spring;
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again."

How then shall we best acquire this precious boon of knowledge? By reading, by observation, by conversation, but above all by the proper use of the thinking powers of the mind. He who thinks little, or not at all, can have

no great store of knowledge, because to think is to take up ideas—to examine them at every side—to become so familiar with them as to be at any time able to recognise them—then, to put them aside, as it were, into the magazine of the mind, so that you shall know where to find them whenever they are needed. According to this obvious view of thinking, it is clearly impossible for ordinary minds to collect ideas with great rapidity, and make them one's own. The more slowly we do a serious work, the better. He who gathers ideas quickly, and seeks to assort and arrange them, produces a jumble rather than a systematic allocation. The thoughts are in his mind, but he knows them imperfectly—he can scarcely find them when they are wanted, and even then he hardly knows how to use them. Hence, it is far more useful to know a little, and know that little well, than to have one's brain overcrowded with ideas that are perfectly unavailable for any practical purpose. We should learn, not that we may appear learned; not that we may shine in conversation, or acquire praise for the performance of any intellectual feat. No. We should learn in order to acquire wisdom, to enjoy the consciousness of possessing the truth, and to be delighted with the wonders it spreads before the eyes of the soul. In what shape soever knowledge comes, whether from books, from the teaching of man or the lessons of experience, it will take no firm grasp of your mind without serious thought, for thought is, as it were, the janitor of the mind, opening the portals through which the treasures of truth are borne, and locking it again when the priceless deposit has been safely stowed away.

Reading is one of the most common and one of the most useful means of enlarging man's sphere of knowledge. It is also one of the easiest and most agreeable. He who enjoys the privilege of reading has arrayed before him the choicest gems of thought that ever enriched the souls of men. All the great thinkers, from the beginning of the world, who have recorded their thoughts, lay their treasures at his feet, and he may make them his own. Wisdom, like a mighty palace, built up by inspired architects from generation to generation, all of whom have contributed materials of rarest beauty, and arranged them with consummate splendour of design and marvellous constructive skill, stands before him brilliant in the sunshine of Eternal

Light—he is bade to enter, for that palace is his, and he may be king over the widest and grandest domain that ever bowed to human sway. To read is, in fact, to converse with the greatest and noblest minds that ever issued from the hands of God, to receive their lessons of wisdom, and be made rich by the inheritance of their intellectual wealth. Yet, even here is great caution to be used, for many have written who have not been wise, and may have poisoned the fountains of truth; and in some books we discover much of that superficial knowledge at whose pernicious tendencies we have been glancing. Read only what those whom you know to be wise approve of. Within that limit read what you love best to learn, for when we read with pleasure we are sure to read with profit. Have some one grand scope before you—seek to perfect yourself in some one important branch of knowledge, and to your perfection in this make all your other reading subsidiary. But whatever you read, read carefully, study thoughtfully. Do not let a sentence pass without understanding it, for good authors do not write sentences without some weight of meaning. If you grow weary of a book, throw it aside and take up another. The mind needs variety, and frequently blank repose. To abstain altogether at times from reading and thinking for several days is good. As sleep renews the energies of the body, and is indispensably necessary for it, so is occasional rest of service to the mind, that its faculties may not be worn out, but that they may be invigorated for fresh labours in the fields of knowledge.

We learn also by observations, and the result is called experience. The knowledge thus acquired is, perhaps, the best of all, for we learn it in spite of us—it makes an indelible impression—it is interwoven with our whole system of thought, and points out with peculiar emphasis the moral standard for our conduct. “Experience,” says Goethe, “is the best of teachers, but the school-fees are very high.” So much the better—we value most what we pay for. But on this subject it is not necessary that I should dwell, for experience comes of its own accord; it is not invited, nor are there any rules for its acquisition; it is the growth of years, and it is a sad reflection that we have most of it when we need it least, that wisdom comes when the life that might have benefited by it is almost passed.

Conversation is another means of increasing our store of knowledge. Many men who mix in good society, with the wise and the learned, may dispense with reading altogether, for they gather from the lips of their friends the wisdom that others collect from books. We should make it a point, as far as possible, always to converse on something useful, to take advantage of every person we meet, that we may learn something from him, for there is no one who does not know something of which we are ignorant. Few things are so agreeable or useful to listen to as a conversation conducted by clever, well-informed men. Every one has something to say, great truths are propounded, fallacies are exposed, old ideas appear in a new dress; brilliant flashes of thought are conveyed through the vivid language of sudden impulse. "It is not good for man to be alone." The solitary student is apt to take narrow views on most subjects; he adopts conclusions without an amount of examination that would warrant their credibility; he falls into fantastical errors which would be exposed in the impartial warmth of debate. Conversation opens our views, brings our faculties into vigorous play, and shows up the latent defects of our opinions, which would never come to light in the dull consideration of the secluded thinker. It will be found that most of those wild doctrines, whether in religion or politics, that have produced unusual agitation in countries, have been excogitated by some studious hermit, such as a Monboddo or a Rousseau, and were never submitted to the test of free and friendly debate. Had they been subjected to this ordeal, they never would have been ventilated by their authors, and we should never have heard the saying of some Roman author, whose name I forget, that "there is no opinion so absurd, but has some philosopher or other to produce in its support." Yet, in comparison to reading, conversation imparts little knowledge, because it is too discursive, too rambling, and seldom threshes out a subject to the last, as a writer does. "The foundation," says Dr. Johnson, "must be laid by reading; general principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject must be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth which a man

gets thus are at such a distance from each other that he never attains to a full view."

But far more important even than knowledge itself is the means of making it useful to ourselves and others. I would have you mark well that there is a great deal of difference between instruction and education. Instruction means imparting to a man the knowledge of certain things; education means the development of a man's natural powers of mind and body. At present, we are dealing only with the mind. To be instructed is very little, unless the mind be trained to employ in practice the lessons imparted to it. For example, you instruct a child in the principles of religion, you teach him the existence of God—the nature of right and wrong, the doctrine of rewards and punishments. This is all very good; but of what advantage is the knowledge of all these things, unless you train that child to exhibit in his conduct the fruit of the lessons you have taught him, unless you develop the good instincts of his nature and mould his mind to virtue? A man may be taught the various arts of bodily exercise—swimming, rowing, leaping, riding, and so on. But unless he swims in fact, row, leap, and ride, your teachings are of no avail. Thus in every other branch of knowledge a man's mind must be exercised, in order that his faculties may be developed and some good accrue. His judgment must be trained to weigh and consider, to reason, and come to just conclusions; his memory must be exercised, in order that he may summon forth his ideas at the moment they are required; his imagination must be taught to prune its extravagances, and restrain its flights within the bounds of reason. All this is education, or drawing out, as the word implies. Now, many errors are committed in the conduct of a boy's education in school. A great deal of knowledge is carried into his head, but his intellectual powers are frequently neglected. He is perhaps taught something of history, geography, geology, botany, mineralogy, electricity, natural history, and other sciences by which a great amount of knowledge is imparted. All the while, however, his mind has been treated only as a reservoir into which a great number of ideas, new and strange to him, have been received. But, of what use are all those facts unless he retain them in a vivid memory, unless he reason on them with sound judgment, unless he

trace them to the great First Cause, unless he turn the knowledge of them to some good practical account in real life, and not repose in the mere pleasure of knowing them? The mind is trained by the study of sciences such as grammar, mathematics, languages, and logic. By those sciences it learns precision, accuracy, order, sound reasoning, self-culture, the power to teach itself, to go forth and climb the Alps of science without the assistance of a guide. Long ago, at school, we could not understand why we were taught various things. For instance, we asked ourselves (I remember I often did) what was the use of a knowledge of geometry, the measurement of the earth. We knew that our parents never intended that we should be surveyors, at least in a professional sense, of the earth, and it was a puzzle to us why we should be subjected to the boredom of squares and circles, of perpendiculars and parallelograms. But all the while, we knew not that our intellect was thus undergoing a most salutary process of training. We know now that we were learning how to reason, to argue closely, to seek the truth and be content with no less; to admit nothing unless we saw it clearly proved, that we ought not to be satisfied with guess and conjecture, but yield belief only to the "inexorable logic of facts." So with mathematics of all kinds; so to a great extent with languages, and especially with the languages called classic, namely, Latin and Greek. The study of these is useful, because they inure children to intellectual difficulties, and make the life of a young student what it ought to be, a life of considerable labour. But what is more useful still, they teach us to convey our sentiments to others in a manner correct, elegant, and pleasing. The ancient authors show us the best modes of speaking and writing, and acquiring all the graces of style; and this is an immense advantage, because, speaking as I am of education, I lay down that knowledge is of very little good unless we do something practical with it. From some classical writers we borrow descriptive power, from others perspicuity, from more simplicity. Some of them educate us in majestic grandeur of expression, some in tenderness, some in pathos, all in dignity. It must, however, be admitted that a great deal of school-time is lost in the study of these languages. Too much importance is attached to them, particularly when there is question of

those whose mission is the hard work-a-day world. But, as an intellectual exercise they are invaluable. It is a pity the science of knowledge is not more generally taught than it is, for, above all the powers of the mind, there is none so important as the reasoning power, or one that requires so much culture; and over the domain of reason logic specially presides. We err from many causes—from ignorance, from superficial knowledge, from prejudice, from mental obliquity, by which we do not view the subject in its proper light, from starting on false premises, and so on. A knowledge of logic corrects all this. Reason, following the day-star of truth, safely conducts the mind to the happy valley of wisdom.

My friends, I fear I have occupied too much of your time already, and I shall not enter farther into this subject; I feel, however, that what I have said may be considered with great profit, as I have not presumed to enunciate anything of whose truth I had not satisfied myself by reading the works of others, or by serious thinking on my own part. What, then, is the great end of all this labour in the pursuit of knowledge? I will tell you. I have spoken of the education of the body—of the exercises of the gymnast, the athlete, the swimmer, the rower, and the rider. What is the end of all these exercises? Is it not that the body may be in good health, and that, as a consequence, the mind, for which the body was made, should be vigorous, vivacious, and happy? Was it not, in a word, that we might attain the consummation desired by the poet—what he ambitioned—a *mens sana in corpore sano*, a sound mind in a healthy body? So, when you ask what is the use of storing the mind with knowledge, of practising it in the acts of thought, and the exercises of reason, I answer—it is that you may benefit your imperishable soul, for whose happiness you were endowed with those intellectual powers. And I say this, not by virtue of my prerogative as a Christian priest, but as a citizen of the world, trained somewhat in the stern school of philosophy. Eternal happiness will consist in a thorough knowledge of God; and, of that happiness the pleasure we feel here in the contemplation of His works is perhaps a foretaste—is perhaps a cognate enjoyment. We now feel pleasure in dabbling near the shore, in the safe and shallow waters; thus we shall bound and exult in the full,

free, and fathomless ocean of eternal wisdom. Study, then, what is good, what is noble, what is God-like. Marvel at the wonders of creation, that you may praise the intelligence that designed and the power that wrought them. Devote to these studies the time that you would otherwise inevitably consume in the pursuit of those base pleasures to which our corrupt nature is unhappily prone, that you may do the work set before you, and fulfil the destiny allotted to you by the Allwise One. But the thoughts that I might utter on this subject will come with double force from a distinguished clergyman of another Church, whom I have already quoted—the celebrated Sidney Smith—and with his observations, expressed in that luminous language so peculiarly his own, I shall conclude my lecture. In his essay on the conduct of the understanding, towards the conclusion of the first part, he says:—“While I am descanting so minutely upon the conduct of the understanding, and the best modes of acquiring knowledge, some may be disposed to ask—‘why conduct my understanding with such endless care? and what is the use of so much knowledge?’ What is the use of so much life? What are we to do with the seventy years of existence allotted to us? and how are we to live them out to the last? I solemnly declare that, but for the love of knowledge, I should consider the life of the meanest hedger and ditcher as preferable to that of the greatest and richest man in the world; for the fire of our minds is like the fire which the Persians burn in the mountains—it flames night and day, and is immortal and not to be quenched! Upon something it *must* act and feed—upon the pure spirit of knowledge, or upon the foul dregs of polluting passions. Therefore, when I say, in conducting your understanding, love knowledge with a great love—with a vehement love—with a love coeval with life;—what do I say but love innocence—love virtue—love purity of conduct—love that which, if you are rich and great, will sanctify the blind fortune which has made you so, and made men call it justice;—love that which, if you are poor, will render your poverty respectable, and make the proudest feel it unjust to laugh at the meanness of your fortunes—love that which will comfort you, advance you, and never quit you—which will open to you the kingdom of thought, and all the boundless regions of conception,

as an asylum against the cruelty, the injustice, and the pain that may be your lot in the outer world,—that which will make your motives habitually great and honourable, and light up in an instant a thousand noble disdains at the very thought of meanness and of fraud! Therefore, if any young man here have embarked his life in pursuit of knowledge, let him go on without doubting or fearing the event;—let him not be intimidated by the cheerless beginnings of knowledge, by the darkness from which she springs, by the difficulties which hover round her, by the wretched habitations in which she dwells, by the want and sorrow which sometimes journey in her train; but let him ever follow her as the Angel that guards him, and as the Genius of his life. She will bring him out at last into the light of day, and exhibit him to the world, comprehensive in acquirements, fertile in resources, rich in imagination, strong in reasoning, prudent and powerful above his fellows in all the relations and in all the offices of life."

LECTURE.¹

THE IRISH CHARACTER ANALYZED.

SOME weeks ago I had the honour to deliver a public lecture in this city on the History of Irish Music. The applause awarded to me on that occasion was such as I fancied no efforts of mine could have merited ; but my modesty was put to a still severer test when some gentlemen informed me that it was the general wish of the public—at least of the Irish portion of the public—that I should lecture again before leaving Boston. So flattering an invitation it was impossible for me to decline, I promised to comply with the general desire, and I am here to redeem that promise.

I know full well the love that Irishmen cherish for their country, and that no subject awakens their interest more keenly, or stirs their hearts more sensitively, than the subject of their native land. And, hence, there is scarcely a period of our history, a feature of our national character, or a biography of any of our great men, which has not, in its turn, formed the subject of a lecture in this country, as well as in the old land. One would think that Irish subjects would pall even on Irish ears, by such frequent repetition ; but it is with the children of the Emerald Isle, as it is with the children of the Church. In the Church there has been but one short gospel for the last eighteen hundred years, and yet we hear it expounded to-day at the hands of an able preacher, with all that freshness of interest which only a novelty, as we fancy, could produce. So the history of Ireland is but a plain record of constant persecution on the one hand, and constant resistance on the other—a perpetual resistance against a superior and implacable power—and yet we never grow weary of the oft-told tale ; we ever still find something new and inspiring in this simple gospel of our fatherland.

I come to address you to-night on a subject of national

¹ Delivered in Boston, 1871.

interest, an analysis of the character of my fellow-countrymen; and, simply, because the subject is national, I am confident that I shall touch your hearts and enlist your sympathies. But I do not trust alone to the nature of my subject; I feel that I come before you as one thoroughly qualified to speak on any Irish subject, as far as one may be qualified by a long and large experience. I am Irish myself to the back-bone—aye, and to the very marrow of that cunning piece of mechanism. Born of Irish parents, on the banks of the Lee, within sound of the Shandon Bells, I should like to know who would have the courage to dispute the Hibernicism of my birth. Imbibing, when a schoolboy, my first lessons of patriotism from the glorious pages of the “Nation” newspaper, illumined then, as it was, by the calm vigour of a Duffy, the immortal fire of a Davis, and the weird majesty of a Clarence Mangan; later on, dipping in the fervid fountain of the young Ireland press—a fountain springing from a Parnassus, where the muses were invoked by such men as John Mitchell, Thomas D’Arcy Magee, and Thomas Francis Meagher, it is no wonder that my Irish heart beat with the true pulses of the patriot. During six years in Maynooth college, thrown amongst five hundred ardent young Irishmen, although we were endowed by the Government (which endowment, by the way, was only a wretched instalment of the millions they had stolen from us centuries before), I never forgot I was Irish. Officiating for eight years in the rural districts of the county, and for eight other years in the city of Cork, it is highly probable that I understand the state of my country; the condition and character of the Irish race, in every walk of life, our virtues and our vices, our strength and our weakness; and that I am qualified to address my audience on that subject.

The great faith and hope of Irishmen at home and abroad is that their country will yet be free. If they had not this hope, they would despair of the justice of the Almighty, who surely will not permit tyrants to prosper for ever; in the realization of this hope they see a vindication of their country, a reparation for all she has endured through long ages of persecution, a compensation for all she has lost, a balm for her wounds, a consolation for the contempt and ignominy to which she has been subjected. We look forward to that day, and we believe in its coming as firmly as

we believe that to-morrow's sun will rise. But why is it so long postponed ?

“ Why still in darkness doth Erin lie sleeping,
Why doth the pure light its dawning delay ? ”

It is not for us, short-sighted mortals, to tell what are the designs of Providence in our regard. But it is easy for us to see how, by our own conduct, those designs may be promoted on the one hand, or frustrated on the other. We may not always perceive the reward of our virtuous actions; but we cannot fail to see what obstacles we sometimes cast in the way of Providence when it is kindly disposed towards us, and how frequently our happiness in this world is marred by our own fatuity and folly. I shall point out the great and noble qualities of the Irish race, on which they may rely for the future regeneration of their country ; but I shall also consider it my duty to animadvert on the weaknesses in the national conduct and character which impede our progress in the path to freedom. To those weaknesses I should not think of alluding here, but that unhappily I find them as strongly ingrained and as pernicious in the breasts of Irishmen here as they are in the old land.

The lessons addressed to Irishmen at home are equally applicable to you ; for you are all of the same stock. You belong to a common fatherland—you have the same loves and antipathies—the same passions, the same interests. You have an Ireland here which you are building up—you have a character to sustain, and a history to respect ; and all that in the teeth of obstacles and difficulties which you understand much better than I do. It is said of religious creeds, that one great cause of their differences is an ignorance on both sides of the real state of the case. We know that to be true with regard to our own religion, to which in all ages crimes and iniquities have been credited, which it denounces with all the vehemence of horror and disgust. So is it with the character of Irishmen ; they are misunderstood by Englishmen at home, and by Americans here. Their vices, and weaknesses, and shortcomings, are proclaimed to the world, as if the denouncers themselves were faultless, while their good qualities are never for a moment thought of. Away with this Pharisaism—with this contemptible hypocrisy ! Let the world see the Irishman as he is, and

I defy any nationality under heaven to rival him, with his weaknesses, his passions, and his vices, no doubt, but with a casket of virtues and noble gifts of soul. With those rare qualities of heart and soul, the Irishman may safely despise the contumely of his enemies, and look forward with confidence to the future freedom of his country as the reward of a long-enduring patience, at the hands of Him who tries even the just man in the furnace of humiliation.

Foremost among the noble qualities of the Irish character—amongst those qualities which not only entitle our country to the respect of the world, but strongly appeal to the retributive justice of heaven—is her steadfast attachment “through ages of bondage and slaughter” to the Christian Faith since it was planted by Patrick in the land. I have no desire, here or elsewhere, on an occasion like the present, to depreciate any other religious creed by extolling my own; that is not my object; I only demand for my fellow-countrymen that meed of admiration which they deserve for their faithful adhesion to a religion in which they sincerely believe, for which their ancestors have bled, and for which they would bleed themselves to-day if such a test of their fidelity were needed. In their attachment to that religion they were not influenced by any worldly motive, for all the inducements the world could offer them invited them to forswear and abandon it; in its defence they endured contempt and ridicule, torture, spoliation, and martyrdom. They simply believed, and they sealed their belief with their blood. There are some who can see no great valour in all this; who put it down to wild fanaticism, or blind stupid obstinacy; yet if those sacrifices which Irishmen have made had been suffered in the cause of any other religion than the Catholic, those worldly philosophers would extol their heroism to the skies. What! and is not the Catholic religion, even in a worldly point of view, at least as respectable as any other religious creed ever propounded to mankind? The question might well raise a smile on the lips of a very novice in history, as if all that is great and glorious, not to say respectable in the world, had not been preserved to us by the Catholic Church—as if civilization had not been rocked by her in the cradle, and nurtured by her up to the full vigour of maturity—as if when the barbarians swept over Europe, demolished the

most glorious works of art, extinguished the lamp of science, set aside lands and subverted thrones, it were not she, who with the torch of the gospel in her hands, startled Europe from her slumbers, re-fashioned chaos into shape, regulated society once more, and made science and art more triumphant than ever. Has she not ever been the true nurse of freedom? What country enjoyed more freedom than Italy previous to the Reformation, when the fine arts were cultivated, under the patronage of the Pontiff, and literature flourished in the midst of free political institutions? Florence was never so magnificent as she was in the Middle Ages, when almost rank with affluence, she shone before the world a glorious Catholic democracy. Catholic Venice was her rival in those days—her rival in the splendour of her opulence and the light of her liberty. When was Spain so glorious as in the days of their Catholic Majesties, Ferdinand and Isabella—when, amongst that haughty race, the inheritance of the Catholic religion was more prized than the purest blood of the aristocracy? The respectability, forsooth, of the Catholic religion! Was it not up to the sixteenth century the only religion of the whole civilized world? Is it not still the religion of one-third of the whole human race? Is it not to-day the religion of the greatest part of Europe, of France and Spain, of Italy and Austria, of Belgium and Bavaria, of Hungary and Poland? Is it not spread all over the world, flourishing among the mountains of Abyssinia and Armenia, as among the Alps and Appenines; by the banks of the Tigris and the Ganges, as by those of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi; on the shores of Australia, as on the shores of the Brazils? Is it not the religion of the greatest philosophers, poets, orators, humourists, artists, civilizers, and benefactors of the human race that have ever appeared in the world: the religion of the Tertullians, the Augustines, the Cyrils, and the Chrysostoms; the religion of a Michael Angelo and a Leonardo da Vinci, of a Raphael and a Reubens, of a Dante and a Petrarch, of a Galileo and a Copernicus, of a Cervantes, a Le Sage, and a Rabellais, of a Sir Thomas More, a Bossuet, and a Fenelon, of a Columbus, a Pizarro and a Cortes? Traverse the continent of Europe, and what do you see? What is everywhere presented to your admiring senses? the old Gothic cathedral, the quaint Hotel-de-Ville, the statues in public places, the paintings and sculptures in public museums,

the thrilling music of cathedral choirs?—all called into existence from generation to generation by the inspiring and indefectible genius of Catholicism. Such is the worldly aspect of that religion which Ireland embraced fourteen hundred years ago, to which she has ever since adhered with unshaken fidelity, for which she has fought and bled through ages of persecution unparalleled in the history of unjust legislation; to which she clings to-day with all the tenacity of the olden time, the history of which is inseparably interwoven with the history of her life, and which, like her own green fields, blooms with equal freshness in the rains and storms of persecution as in the pleasant sunshine of prosperity and peace.

But Irishmen are not content to cherish their religion at home; they would extend its blessings as far as possible to the whole human race. To what clime or region of the world will you turn and not find an Irish priest, that indomitable propagandist of the Christian faith? Plant an Irish family in any region of the globe, and you plant with them the seeds of Christianity. This vast Continent affords the most striking proof of what I say. Within a few generations a hierarchy, and clergy, and churches, and Catholic communities have sprung up, as if by magic, all over the land. But you are more familiar with these facts than I am. Irishmen in America, poor and struggling, are never tired of contributing to the purposes of religion. Many give their last dollar in the cause of charity, and trust to Providence for themselves. They take more pride in contemplating a noble structure raised to the glory of the Almighty, than they would in regarding a dwelling-place constructed for their own comfort by the genius of their industry and talent. But why do I dwell on the Irishman's attachment to his faith? Because you cannot conceive an Irishman without it, and because I look upon it as his greatest strength, and his most reliable hope for the future. The God whom he honours will never abandon him.

Such unflinching devotion to the noblest cause for which man ever suffered may be tested by long and bitter trials; but in good time a grateful God will reward with priceless blessings a fidelity to him unparalleled in the history of the human race.

Another grand characteristic of the Irish race, and one surely destined to triumph in the end, is their intense love

of country—a love, the like of which is experienced by no people under heaven—a love which is not a mere sentiment, but a deep-seated passion, interweaving itself with all the businesses of their lives, running like a silver thread through all the varied tissue of their thoughts, growing with their growth, and strengthening with their strength. The love of country is a noble passion; it has inspired the most glorious thoughts, words, and deeds that have ever appealed to the admiration of mankind; it has been the theme of poets and orators from the earliest ages to the present day. Religion, which decries most other human passions, applauds, stimulates, and glorifies this. He who does not feel this generous throbbing in his breast is regarded as a craven, a recreant, a poltroon: but such are rare in any country—

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said—
This is my own, my native land?”

The Irishman has peculiar reasons for loving his country. First, there is the physical aspect of the land, the “Emerald Isle,” so called from “the brightest of green” that bedecks its fields. Where in the whole world are there such lakes and mountains, such sparkling rivers, such smiling valleys, such genial sunshine, such gentle showers? And then, each spot has its history—the history of a thousand, perhaps two thousand years. Here is the *Cromlech*, standing still in the open field, the altar of a pagan faith, which takes you back to the time when the Druids performed their mystic rites, and when Bel was the God of the Celt. Each mouldering stone is a chronicle of the past! Here is the Round Tower, whose origin and object are lost in the twilight of fable. Here is the ruin of a once formidable castle, wrapped in its mantle of ivy, like some “warrior taking his rest, with his martial cloak around him.” Here is the still more inspiring ruin of some great monastery or church, telling of a day when the Christian religion, like a sweet incense, breathed its hallowed aroma over the hearts and souls of the people, ere the rapacious greed of a Henry had robbed them of their sacred treasures, or the withering hand of a Cromwell had smitten them with desolation and decay. Tottering with age, and with the venerable hoar of time upon their

brows, Nestor-like, those grand old ruins now can only tell of the splendour of a by-gone time :—

“ Each ivied arch and turret lone,
Plead haughtily for glories gone.”

Besides the physical aspect of the land, there is the long list of traditions, descending from one generation to another—traditions in which truth and romance are strangely blended together, and affect with pleasure the minds of a lively and imaginative people. There are the Fairy tales, the delight of infancy and the superstitious faith of maturer years. Tales of the Banshee and the Jack o’ the Lantern, the Pooka and the Leprechaun ; and marvellous ghost stories of haunted houses and under-ground caves, which, narrated some winter night by the blazing hearth, by some venerable *raconteur*, make the blood to tingle in the veins with terror, and call up before the excited vision the dread forms of troublous spirits that still walk the earth. This love of country beats more warmly in the breast of the exile than it does in the bosom of the resident ; for “ absence makes the heart grow fonder,” and imagination is the most deceptive of all painters. The exile is ever picturing to his mind’s eye those charms from which he is separated, and in which he may never rejoice again. Before his eyes beam, with ever-increasing brightness, those green fields of his native land—the hill and vale—the wood and stream—the roads and lanes ever familiar to his memory, through which he sported when a boy. He still hears in fancy the wild song of the thrush, and the blackbird, and the linnet ; he stands beneath the cromleach and the cabin, the shattered castle and the crumbling church : nay more, he recalls, on the canvas of a glowing memory, the festive scenes in which he so often shared, in that land of such mysterious charms. He sees the joyous gatherings at the wedding feast, the plentiful board, and the smiling faces of the “ neighbours,” that have flocked to the scene from miles around, he hears the gay music of the flute, the fiddle, and the bag-pipe, and his feet beat sympathetic to the boys and girls treading some lively measure—a jig or a reel—on the resounding floor. He thinks of the fair and the race-course ; of Donnybrook and Punchestown ; of the hurling match between some rival parishes ; the wild “tally-ho” the huntsmen, as they flash, like a scarlet meteor,

through the air, in full pursuit of unhappy Reynard : he thinks of the hospitality and generosity of his countrymen, which have passed into a proverb ; but what touches him most of all, he thinks of the long centuries through which, by an iniquitous code of laws, more base and barbarous than if they were devised by demons, the hearts of a people so warm, so generous, and so brave, so open to pleasure, so accessible to mirth, have been crushed and ground down ;—by which he himself, and millions of his race, have been forced to quit for ever the land of their birth—the land they loved so well, and to be content with the *memories* of the Green Isle, whose enchanting realities they may never behold again. Will such a love as this be frustrated for ever of its noble aspirations ? No ; for, after the love of God, the holiest passion of the soul is a love of country ; and the Power that nerved the arm of David in his conflict with the Philistine, and that inspired the valour of the Machabees against the enemies of their country, will yet restore to the yearnings of Irishmen the land whose freedom would be to them the most priceless earthly boon that even Heaven could bestow.

But are Irishmen capable of self-government ? Two things seem necessary for this capability, namely, the head to govern, and the strong arm to control—intellectual and physical vigour. And who will deny those attributes to Irishmen ? Take intellect. In what department of intellect have Irishmen not excelled ? In the Senate we have had a Grattan, a Flood, a Burke, and a Sheridan. At the Bar we have had a Curran, and a Plunket, an O'Connell, and a Shiel. In the field we can boast of an Owen Roe O'Neill, a Sarsfield, and a Duke of Wellington. Were we able to disentomb the great men of the buried past, how many sage Brehons, lawgivers of the land, could we bring to light, as I showed you in my last Lecture ? How many bards and poets of the very first genius, before whom even our boasted Swift, Goldsmith, and Moore would “pale their ineffectual fires ?” At the present day, all over the world, there appears to prevail only a decent mediocrity of intellect in every department ; by the wide diffusion of learning it does not seem to abound in any particular quarter ; few men of genius or talent stand prominently forward anywhere, yet wherever intellect or genius flourishes, there is the Irishman ever with his stout shoulder to the wheel,

toiling in the fields of literature, editing newspapers and periodicals, excelling in the fine arts, in painting, music, and sculpture; filling high offices in the State, capable of holding and adorning any position with which he may be entrusted. But, indeed, here I labour in vain, for no one has ever disputed the intellectual calibre of Ireland as compared with other nations; and it is needless for me to proclaim it.

Equally unnecessary is it for me to dwell on the courage, the bravery, the chivalry of my fellow-countrymen. Many a hard-fought field on the Continent of Europe and the Continent of America can testify to the valour and pluck of the Irish soldier. There is something almost ludicrous in the eagerness with which an Irishman longs to be in the thick of a fight. Like the war-horse in Job, "he smelleth the battie afar off, and he crieth ha! ha!" Wherever fighting is to be done there is the irrepressible Patrick. Namur is familiar with his war-cry. The Adige and Cremona have witnessed the strength of his arm. Blenheim remembers Lord Clare's Dragoons; the deeds of the Irish Brigade at Ramillies and Fontenoy we repeat like a pater-noster. The olive-groves of Spain have drunk the young blood of the Irish soldier. In the republics of Chili, Bolivia, and Venezuela; the praises of O'Brien, Dillon, Devereux, and other Irish patriots, are yet sung in the soft Castilian tongue by the banks of the Orinoco and the mountain fastnesses of the Andes. What shall I say to the exploits of my fellow-countrymen in your late revolutionary war? Let Bull's Run and the Rappahannock speak. Let Gain's Hill and Malvern Hill, and Antietam, and numerous other scenes of warfare speak, and tell if the children of Hibernia turned their backs upon the foe. By the banks of the Euxine and beneath the shadows of the Himalayas, in the Crimea and in India, Irishmen have won the laurels of the brave. They fought for the Father of their Church at Spoleto and Ancona. At the present moment the proudest, the most unblemished, the most martial name amongst the legions of Europe is Patrick MacMahon, inheritor of all the dignity and chivalry of a warlike ancestry, while thousands of his race, animated by the same martial instincts as his own flock from the Green Isle, to swell the ranks of struggling France, and throw the balance of their strength and valour against the cruel and rapacious Teuton.

I have mentioned the name of Richard Lalor Shiel. Once in the House of Lords, Lord Lyndhurst, had the audacity to say that the Irish were not entitled to the same privileges as Englishmen, because they were "aliens," "aliens," said he, "in race—aliens in country—aliens in religion." "Aliens!" cried Shiel, in his place in the House of Commons. "Good God, was Arthur, Duke of Wellington, in the House of Lords, and did he not start up and exclaim: 'Hold! I have seen the aliens do their duty.' The Duke of Wellington is not a man of an excitable temperament. His mind is of a cast too martial to be easily moved; but, notwithstanding his habitual inflexibility, I cannot help thinking that when he heard his Roman Catholic countrymen (for we are his countrymen) designated by a phrase as offensive as the abundant vocabulary of his eloquent adversary could supply,—I cannot help thinking that he ought to have recollected the many fields of fight in which we have been contributors to his renown. The battles, fortunes, sieges, that he has passed ought to have come back upon him. He ought to have remembered that from the earliest achievement, in which he displayed that military genius which has placed him foremost in the annals of modern warfare, down to that last and surpassing combat, which has made his name imperishable—from Assaye to Waterloo—the Irish soldiers, with whom your armies are filled, were the inseparable auxiliaries to the glory with which his unparalleled successes have been crowned. Whose were the armies that drove your bayonets at Vimiera through the phalanxes that never reeled in the shock of war before? What desperate valour climbed the steeps and filled the moats at Badajos? All his victories should have rushed and crowded back upon his memory:—Vimiera, Badajos, Salamanca, Albuera, Toulouse, and last of all, the greatest!—Tell me, for you were there—I appeal to the gallant soldier before me [Sir Henry Hardinge,] from whose opinions I differ, but who bears, I know, a generous heart in an intrepid breast; tell me, for you must needs remember, on that day when the destinies of mankind were trembling in the balance—while death fell in showers—when the artillery of France was levelled with the precision of the most deadly science—when her legions, incited by the voice, and inspired by the example, of her mighty leader, rushed again and again to the onset—tell me, if for an

instant, when to hesitate for an instant was to be lost, the 'aliens' blenched? And when at length the moment for the last and decisive movement had arrived, and the valour which had so long been wisely checked, was at last let loose—when, with words familiar, but immortal, the great captain commanded the great assault—tell me if Catholic Ireland, with less heroic valour than the natives of this your own glorious country, precipitated herself upon the foe? The blood of England, Scotland, and Ireland flowed in the same stream, and drenched [the same field. When the chill morning dawned—when the dead lay cold and stark together—in the same deep pit their bodies were deposited; the green corn of Spring is now breaking from their commingled dust; the dew falls from Heaven upon their union in the grave. Partakers in every peril, in the glory shall we not be permitted to participate, and shall we be told as a requital that we are estranged from the noble country, for whose salvation our life-blood has been poured out?"

If ever the freedom of Ireland must be won by a disciplined Irish soldiery, we, at least, need have no fear for the result.

The faults and weaknesses of the Irish character are less, perhaps, than those of any nation under the sun, and yet there are few people anywhere who are so heartily abused as the Irish. Thus we hear of the dirty, lazy Irish, the landlord-shooting Irish, the drunken Irish, and so on. Such is the hatred existing against our race in the breasts of some strangers, that, as you are aware, the familiar appendage, "No Irish need apply," is usually tacked on to the advertisements concerning vacant situations. Now, how far are these charges well founded? Are the Irish really dirtier, lazier, more murderous, more drunken than the people of other countries? With regard to the bad habits of the Irish, it must never be forgotten that they were constantly debarred from the advantages which other people have enjoyed. For centuries they were starved, oppressed, persecuted, slain. To people living in perpetual serfdom and dread, the decencies and refinements of life were of no consideration. For other centuries, by a hellish code of laws, they were deprived of education; they were brought up in stolid, blank ignorance. How, I ask, could a people thus brought to the level of the brute,

be expected to keep up in the race with other nationalities, to whom every educational privilege was freely and lavishly extended? Things, no doubt, have changed, and the light of learning is again permitted to dawn upon the land; but a child is not educated in a few years, nor a country in a few generations. The Irish are by nature proud, sensitive, passionate, and these are dispositions which by neglect of culture fructify in evil deeds, but in reality they are noble instincts, which, tempered by a wise and careful training, lead to the grandest, the noblest results. No nation in history has ever won respect that was not sensitive to insult, proud in the consciousness of its own dignity, and passionate to avenge its wounded honour.

But let us examine, and briefly detail those charges against the Irish. They are accused of dirt. Remember, I repeat, that for centuries the Irish, especially in the rural districts, have been kept in the most extreme poverty, barely able to subsist, while their toil and their sweat went to support in indolence and ease the landlords who ground their faces. It is hard for poverty and cleanliness to abide together. The fine lady, whose person is a model of neatness, and who has many servants to set her house in order, can preach valuable lessons to the dirty poor, and modestly enforce her precept by her own admirable example. But after all, it is not very easy to be clean when you live on a mud floor. It is, no doubt, desirable that the poor should struggle against this bad habit of dirt, just as it is desirable that we who have got over it, should struggle against other bad habits to which we are addicted. It is, to be sure, painful to see poor people neglect the little means by which they may succeed in making their houses decent and comfortable. But let us not judge harshly. Habits engendered through a long time are not got rid of in an hour, probably not in a generation. Indeed, to the poor and naked, dirt is a kind of protection against cold, and it demands some resolution on the part of those who are chill and hungry to get rid of it. When it comes to a question between soap and bread, I fancy the stomach will carry the day. But remove the Irish from home, give them fair play, set them an example of cleanliness, and what is the result? Why, I should like to know, who do all the cleanliness in American houses? Is it not the girls of Ireland? Who presents to your admiring vision the

immaculate door-step as you enter the house? The Irish girl, who makes the brass-plate to shine, and the bell-handle to glisten! The Irish girl, who has "fixed" the lovely drawing-room, and swept from the mirror the last atom of dust that could prevent you from admiring your handsome features. Who has arranged the dinner-table so daintily, and as you sit to dinner, who helps you with so much grace and elegance of manner? The Irish girl, who, perhaps, last year, was obliged by poverty's unconquerable necessity to move about without shoe or stocking on the wet mud floor of her native cabin in oppressed, mis-governed Ireland. And are the Irish lazy? I should like to know what a lazy Irishman would want in America. How many dollars a day would he earn with his hands in his pocket? Are they lazy Irishmen who carry on all the great works in this great country, who work in your factories, who delve in your mines, who build your cities? I have heard of your Erie Canal, an excavation five hundred miles long, cut through rocks and mountains, opening a passage for mighty waters strewing a new path for the beneficent progress of commerce. It was designed by Irish brains, and carried by Irish hands. Who make your railways? Who, in the face of relentless pestilence, cut through the Isthmus of Panama? Who, surrounded by truculent savages, made the great Pacific Railroad from the shores of the Atlantic to the distant California? The lazy Irish. But this absurd charge need not be dwelt on seriously, as I believe few are found to make it in a serious spirit.

The Irish are accused of being murderers, and no doubt a great number of murders have been committed in Ireland, and in many instances the perpetrators have escaped the vengeance of the law. Now, no one can defend a murder, because it is a gross and direct violation of one of God's most solemn commands. It is a terrible thing to take in cold blood the life of a fellow-man, and to send him before his great Judge with all his imperfections on his head. But is murder more common in Ireland than elsewhere? Surely not. Perhaps there is no country in the world where murder is so common as England. There we every day hear of a father murdering his wife and children, and then destroying his own life, or it is the mother who performs this unnatural and wholesale crime. Child-

murder is committed so frequently, that, a few years ago, Dr. Lankester, one of the coroners for the Middlesex district, stated that he held one inquest on a murdered child, on an average, every day in the year. In every country, owing to the weakness of human nature and the strength of human passion, a certain number of murders will be committed. In Ireland the excess of this normal average consists of agrarian murders, murders of landlords, and what is the cause of this? Why are landlords more obnoxious than other members of the community? I need scarcely tell you, for you know it; but I will remind you. In Ireland, since the passing of the penal laws, the farmer was regarded as a serf, a slave, as one whose existence is barely tolerated, who should work and toil all the days of his life, and be content with the mere blessing of existence. His condition improved since the passing of Catholic Emancipation. An outrage could not be committed upon him with quite so much impunity as before; but he was still a serf in the true sense of the word; he worked with the sweat of his brow on the farm whereon he was born, and on which his father and grandfather had been born before him. The landlord imposed whatever rent he pleased; if the farm was improved by the farmer's industry, up went the rent. At length it grew so high that the farmer could not pay; the times grew bad, labour became too dear. Other evils conspired against the unfortunate occupier. He was served with a notice to quit; he borrowed, begged, and paid, and procured a respite. But at length the day of reckoning came again. He was not able to meet the demands of his rapacious landlord. Then came the crow-bar; the house was razed to the ground, and the poor, struggling, honest, hard-working, broken-hearted man was cast naked on the world. His famished children walked before, his squalid wife clung to his side, and had no word of consolation. They gazed their last on the old familiar homestead, on the fields with which all the humble joys of their lives were associated; on the trees whose trembling leaves had so often made sweet music to their ears. Now they are alone, homeless, and friendless, and penniless, on the face of the bleak, cold world. The law of the land, instead of protecting them, cries out to the landlord, "You have done your duty." What? and may this pampered minion trample on God's

creature, and no feeling of resentment spring up in the breast of the outraged victim? Is it no murder for the purse-proud landlord to drive to starvation and death hundreds of his fellow-beings, whose only crime is that they do not labour more than that God has given them power to do? Does he not kill them as effectually as if he severed their throats from ear to ear? And is he to escape the obloquy of mankind and the penalty of the law? The unhappy being whom he has driven from his home goes his way brooding over the wrong—the cruel wrong that has been visited upon himself, and the wife and children of his bosom. The crushed worm will turn on the heel that tramples it. Who can be surprised that the demon of hatred and revenge takes possession of his maddened brain; that he seeks for an instrument of destruction, and wreaks upon the monster who provoked him “the wild justice of revenge?” You, who live in peace and plenty, protected by just and beneficent laws, free and independent, do not condemn too rashly or too bitterly the wretch from whose mouth bread has thus been wantonly snatched, and whose innocent children and loving wife have thus been doomed to starve before his eyes, nor blame too severely those who conspire to defraud the law of its revenge on the murderer. The law in Ireland has never been the friend of the people. On the contrary, it has murdered them by thousands and tens of thousands. I speak not of the legal murders committed during the bloody sway of the penal code. I speak of what has happened in our own recollection. In the famine years, when the poor starving peasants were not able to pay their rent, the law permitted the landlords to drive them out of the country, to crowd them on board fever ships, and banish them across the wide Atlantic. The bones of those wretched exiles lie in myriads beneath huge, shapeless mounds on the banks of the St. Lawrence, in Montreal, and Quebec, and on the shores of New Brunswick. This was all done by law. And will any one turn round and say, the Irish should respect the law? “Philosophy is a very good horse in the stable, but an arrant jade upon a journey.” Put yourself in the place of the Irish peasant, whom his landlord has brought to ruin, and tell me will you have more patience than he? In this country, if a man outrages your wife, and you shoot him dead in the public streets it

will be hard to get a jury that will find you guilty of wilful murder. And which is the less provocative crime? To destroy the character of a woman, or to put to a slow and painful death an unoffending father and his offspring? The Irish peasants, therefore, are no more murderers than the peasantry of any other country; they have committed murders in some districts, under pressure of the most exciting provocation. As a rule, even in the much maligned Tipperary, the Irish peasant possesses every virtue that could adorn mankind, mingled with a softness akin to that for which the gentler sex is distinguished:—

“Tall is his form, his heart is warm,
His spirit light as any fairy,
His wrath is fearful as the storm
That sweeps the hills of Tipperary.

“Lead him to fight for fatherland;
His is no courage cold and wary.
The troops live not on earth could stand
The headlong charge of Tipperary.

“But meet him in his cabin rude,
Or dancing with his dark-haired Mary,
You'd swear they knew no other mood
Than mirth and love in Tipperary.”

We now come to that feature of the Irish character which has been so seriously commented on all over the world—I mean a passion for intoxicating drinks. And I must confess that here indeed is cause of just complaint against us. I do not admit that the Irish are more addicted to drunkenness than their neighbours; I can produce no statistics on the point. But it cannot be denied that our people are deplorably prone to habits of intoxication, and that, in fact, this vice is the great bar to their prosperity in the world, and to the respect which they would win amongst their fellow-men in foreign countries where they dwell. We must stare the ugly fact in the face. Drunkenness is on the increase in Ireland, it is spreading amongst the women as well as the men. To what extent it exists here you can best judge. But of its sad effects no man

can form a just estimate: it debases the dignity of our nature, it paralyses the intellect, it extinguishes the reason, it unnerves the arm of labour, it brings poverty, disgrace, disease and death, not only on the offender but on those who depend upon him for life and all its legitimate enjoyments. I do believe that, if the Irish race were only sober, there is no earthly difficulty they could not vanquish, there is no honour they might not attain, no amount of respect that they might not conciliate. But as long as this blot exists on the national character, we must be content to be pitied and despised by the more prudent and temperate portion of mankind.

The only other serious weakness of the Irish character that I can discern, and one which, though not so debasing as drunkenness, is yet equally disastrous to our national honour and progress, is that spirit of dissension which exists among Irishmen. This spirit is not of recent growth, it seems to have been at all times inherent in the national character. It is said that every man is born with the seeds of some disease in his system, which slowly germinate, and finally produce his death, unless accident interpose to effect that object. This malady is said to be his congenital disease. It appears to me that disunion is the congenital disease of Irishmen. Ireland, no doubt, is composed of various and conflicting elements of population; it has its Protestants and Catholics, its Celts and Anglo-Saxons, the dominant and the subjugated races; and it is not unnatural that those conflicting elements should sometimes sound a discordant note. But what is really to be deplored is that spirit of dissension that exists among parties whose interests are identical. On every public occasion where the interests of the country are at stake, we find the popular party always split up among themselves. Hence, the bitterest feelings are aroused, life-long enmities are created, and the national cause remains at the same eternal stand-still. Now, perhaps, what is more extraordinary still is, that those seeds of congenital disease in the national character appear to flourish and develop themselves in a foreign clime even more vigorously than on their native soil, although the class who emigrate are, for the most part, the mass of the people who are Celtic, Catholic, and English-hating to the back bone.

If Irishmen ever united, it surely ought to be in this country, where they have only one great common interest—to establish a Celtic, Christian, free Ireland, which they are debarred from establishing at home. And yet, what is the fact? I learned it with surprise, I perceive it with shame, I denounce it with indignation—even here, Irishmen have their dislikes, their prejudices, their jealousies, their clan-nish antipathies, their vocabulary of abuse against each other. I was not long in America when I became aware of the existence of this feeling amongst my fellow-countrymen. I refused to believe it, but I have now travelled, and mixed too much amongst them to hoodwink the fact. It confounds, distresses, and humiliates me. I found that amongst a section of my countrymen who happen to be born in what is called the North—as if, at this distance, the cardinal points of our little island were a matter of any great importance—the province, and particularly the county from which I hail, were regarded with contempt. I should like to know what the poor county of Cork has done that it should be regarded with contempt. I believe our accent is remarkably Irish. Would it be more respectable if it were English or Scotch? And is it so great a stigma on an Irishman to have an Irish accent? I wish somebody would tell me what is the contemptible point of a Corkman's character, that I might honestly grapple with it, and see what it is worth. Have we not produced as many great men as any other Irish county? If I am not mistaken, we have added to the catalogue of Irish greatness the name of Edmund Burke, one of the greatest statesmen, philosophers, and orators the world has ever seen. We claim the nativity of John P. Curran. William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, was born in the county of Cork. The Shearses, brothers, who perished on the scaffold for the cause of their country, were born in the suburbs of Cork city. The celebrated Arthur O'Leary was a Corkman; so was James Barry, the painter; so was Maclise, one of the greatest painters of modern times. Thomas Davis, the poet, was born in Mallow, in the county of Cork. Father Prout was a native of Cork city. These names occur to me by accident. I could find many more, were I to search, but they are sufficient to show that, in the ranks of intellect, we Corkmen have nothing to be

ashamed of. In any popular outburst of patriotism, is Cork behind-hand? What then is wrong with us? Are we not as good-looking as if we were raised in Sligo or Donegal? Do we not spend our money as freely as you do in Antrim or Tyrone? Are we not as well educated? But why do I dwell on this point? To show you that, instead of tweaking your noses at any county, you should be proud of them all, as part of that dear old land which has produced so many great and noble men. I need not tell you that those feelings of mutual antipathy are never dreamt of at home. Let there be an end of them here, for surely they are not the inspiration of the Angel of Peace.

And now I have done. I have pointed out what I consider the good and the weak points of our national character—what should excite our pride, and what should suffuse our cheeks with shame. In this latter part of my analysis, I have acted with a boldness for which I entreat your indulgence. Men do not like to be reminded of their faults, and we Irish have been treated too frequently to unqualified praise. For my part, I love the truth, and I should consider myself the veriest coward and dissembler if I came here to analyse your character, and did not point out your faults. Every day's experience proves to me that you are a great and a noble people; that you are doing more for the promotion of Christianity, and consequent civilization, and for the dignity of manhood, than any nation on the face of the earth: and one of the noblest features of your character, which I have not touched (for I could not touch them all), is the lofty indifference with which you treat the view with which other nationalities regard you—you proceed in the proud consciousness that you are doing what is just and right, and you must triumph in the end. But, if you love the God who made you, and would secure His blessing—if you value the approval of a good conscience—if you prize the esteem of all good men—if you would secure success in the race for the world's legitimate enjoyments, study the virtue of temperance, and, instead of disparaging each other, pull together; union is strength—your enemies will not help you in the road to success—they rather rejoice in your discord as their best ally against you. On yourselves

alone you must rely, whether toiling in solitude or mingling in the hum and shock of men :—

“ Then flung alone, or hand in hand,
In mirthful hour, or spirit solemn,
In lowly toil, or high command,
In social hall, or charging column.
In tempting wealth and trying woe,
In struggling with a mob's dictation,
In bearing back a foreign foe,
In training up a troubled nation,
Still hold to truth, abound in love,
Refusing every base compliance,
Your praise within, your prize above,
And live and die in self-reliance.”

POETRY.

POETRY.

THE CORK CATHEDRAL BELLS.

[Written on the occasion of erecting a Peal of Bells in St. Mary's Cathedral, Cork.]

I.

WHAT joyous chimes, so new and sweet,
Ring out upon the winter air?
See people pause in crowded street,
And peasants form their thanks in prayer;
The solemn day—the promised hour,
The smiling face of nature tells
That now at length from yonder tower
Peal forth the Cork Cathedral Bells.

II.

Three hundred years have come and gone,
Since last were heard those sacred chimes;
But patient Faith kept burning on,
Expectant of more gracious times,
And heaven's voice the tempest stays;
Once more the Christian bosom swells,
And Cork pours forth responsive praise
To-day from her Cathedral Bells.

III.

Three hundred years of night and gloom,
Enlightened statesmen, was your meed
Of justice to a land whose doom
Was to preserve her cherished creed.

Vain all your arts to quench a flame
 Which God's Almighty breath compels.
 Peal forth a pæan to His Name,
 Once more, ye Cork Cathedral Bells.

IV.

Ring out—the Lee, whose source Finbar
 Hath blessed, stops upon its way
 To hear those melodies which are
 By his successor waked to-day—
 To hear those mellow numbers fall,
 Weaving in air their solemn spells,
 After oppression's iron thrall,
 To hear the Cork Cathedral Bells.

I'M LEFT ALONE!

[Written on the death of an intimate friend, a Fellow Student in College.]

I.

I'M left alone! I'm left alone!
 And sorrows now betide me,
 And drearily the hours have flown
 Since thou wert here beside me.
 My heart is lone! My heart is lone!
 And dark'ning clouds surround it,
 Because thy sunny smiles are gone,
 That late were beaming round it.

II.

I'm left alone! I'm left alone!
 Should friendship thus deceive me?
 Her sweets I scarce can call my own,
 Ere those I cherish leave me.
 Tho' charming was the wreath of love
 She wove for us together,
 T'were better far she never wove
 A wreath so soon to wither.

III.

I'm left alone ! I'm left alone !
 No more are round me ringing
 That merry laugh, and mellow tone,
 Of music once too winning—
 Yet, still each loved and well-known sound
 Within my bosom lingers,
 On soft and sadden'd key attuned
 By mem'ry's fairy fingers.

IV.

I'm left alone ! I'm left alone !
 Each morn brings thee before me.
 And when the last day-beam has flown,
 Thy image still hangs o'er me.
 I'm compassed round with happy smiles ;
 For me they've sadness only :
 My heart no alien joy beguiles,
 For I, alas ! am lonely.

V.

I'm left alone ! I'm left alone !
 But shall it be for ever ?
 No—there's a sphere where souls live on,
 To be dissunder'd never.
 There free for love, and love alone,
 No sorrows shall betide me ;
 And Heaven to me shall sweeter be,
 When thou art there beside me.

THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER.

'TIS the last rose of summer,
 Left blooming alone,
 All her lovely companions
 Are faded and gone !
 No flow'r of her kindred,
 No rosebud is nigh,
 To reflect back her blushes,
 Or give sigh for sigh.

ECCĒ ultima rosa
 Florescit æstatis,
 Nec rubet ex omnibus
 Una cognatis !
 In hortu, heu ! sola
 Suspirans marcescit,
 Nam flos qui confleret,
 Jam diu discessit.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one,
 To pine on the stem,
 Since the lovely are sleeping,
 Go, sleep thou with them ;
 Thus kindly I scatter
 Thy leaves on the bed,
 Where thy mates of the garden
 Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may I follow,
 When friendships decay,
 And from love's shining circle
 The gems drop away !
 When true hearts lie withered,
 And fond ones are flown,
 Oh ! who would inhabit
 This bleak world alone ?

Non sinam te miseram,
 Sic deperire,
 Sed volo cum sociis
 Te condormire ;
 Sic clemens do folia
 Supra rosetum,
 Perierunt sodales
 Et gusta tu lætum.

Sic peream, caris
 Cum fuerim orbatus
 Nec orbis Amoris,
 Fulgebit gemmatus !
 In mundo horrendo,
 Quis ultro maneret
 Si simul amatis
 Carisque egeret.

FILL THE BUMPER FAIR.

FILL the bumper fair,
 Ev'ry drop we sprinkle
 O'er the brow of care
 Smooths away a wrinkle.
 Wit's electric flame
 Ne'er so swiftly passes,
 As when thro' the flame
 It shoots from brimming glasses.

Fill the bumper fair,
 Ev'ry drop we sprinkle
 O'er the brow of care
 Smooths away a wrinkle.

Sages can, they say,
 Grasp the lightning's pinions,
 And bring down its ray
 From the starr'd dominions.
 So we sages sit,
 And 'mid bumpers bright'ning,
 From the heaven of wit
 Draw down all its lightning.

Would'st thou know what first
 Made our souls inherit

POCULA replete,
 Frons enim rugosa,
 Curæ, potu læti,
 Vini fit formosa.
 Calicis ex ore,
 Alte si potares,
 Alus lepore,
 Facile præstares.

Pocula replete,
 Frons enim rogosa,
 Curæ, potu læti,
 Vini fit formosa.

Cælo de profundo,
 Sapientes vere,
 Jovis summi mundo,
 Ignem detulêre,
 Sapientiores,
 Nos, ut debacchamur,
 Cœlo de leporis,
 Fulgura furamur

Velles scire quare,
 Pellimur confestim,

This ennobling thirst
 For wine's celestial spirit ?
 It chanced upon one day,
 When, as bards inform us,
 Prometheus stole away
 The loving fire that warms us.

The careless youth, when up
 To glory's fount aspiring,
 Took nor urn nor cup
 To hide the pilfered fire in.
 But oh ! his joy, when round
 The halls of heaven spying,
 Among the stars he found
 A bowl of Bacchus lying.

Some drops were in that bowl,
 Remains of last night's pleasure,
 With which the sparks of soul
 Mix'd their burning treasure.
 Hence the goblet's show'r
 Hath such spells to win us,
 Hence its mighty power
 O'er the flame within us.

Fill the bumper fair,
 Ev'ry drop we sprinkle
 O'er the brow of care
 Smooths away a wrinkle.

Vini sic amare,
 Spiritum celestem ?
 Vates Prometheus,
 Scimus cecinisse
 Ignem æthereum,
 Olim rapuisse.

Fertur autem illum,
 Nulla cum adstaret,
 Urna quâ scintillam,
 Rutilam celaret.
 Jovis inter aulas,
 Circum se spexisse,
 Ibique Bacchi mollis,
 Crateram reperisse.

Fœcibus cum meri,
 Funditur scintilla,
 Quœque cum crateræ,
 Coruscaret stilla.
 Virtus inde vino,
 Hincque dum vivamus,
 Igne hoc divino
 Semper ardeamus.

Pocula replete,
 Frons enim rugosa,
 Curæ, potu læti,
 Vini fit formosa.

MY ROSARY.

[A few weeks ago we published a poem, which we noticed as containing much quaint and simple beauty, but even strangely irregular in composition. We are happy to see that its beauties have met with appreciation. Our distinguished reverend orator and writer, Father Buckley, of Cork, has sent us the following exquisite transcription, if we may call it so, which is, indeed, the diamond cut and polished. The writer of "My Rosary" has reason to feel highly complimented at this very particular notice from an able man.—*American Paper.*]

SOME twenty years ago or more,
 When famine wasted Erin's shore,
 And children's wails made mothers sore,
 'Twas then I got my Rosary.

With tears I stood upon the strand,
And bade adieu to native land ;
My mother then, with trembling hand,
Put into mine this Rosary.

“ My child, it almost breaks my heart
To think that you and I must part ;
But promise me, no human art
Will wean you from your Rosary.

“ But if some brighter day should dawn,
And some one ask my colleen bawn
To wed him, say your all is gone
Except your mother’s Rosary.

“ And now, my dearest child, adieu !
God’s angels will watch over you
If to your promise you keep true—
To Him and to your Rosary.”

Through all the wildness of the storm,
’Mid women’s shrieks and men’s alarm,
I still was calm ; I feared no harm
For me or for my Rosary.

I reach the country of “ the free : ”
Whither, oh ! whither, shall I flee ?
A chapel with a Cross I see,
I go and say my Rosary.

A stranger among strangers thrown,
I work for bread, without a groan,
Save when a scornful mien was shown,
Not me, but my brown Rosary.

Years passed, and then a gay young man,
I blush to tell it—said, “ You can
Of me, dear, make a happy man”—
I went and said my Rosary.

He knew th’ advice my mother gave
Ere I had crossed the stormy wave ;
’Tho’ she lies in the dark, cold grave,
Her memory’s in my Rosary.

He smiled, and coldly turned away,
 Nor e'en a parting word did say:
 I sought my room, and then did pray
 To God, on mother's Rosary.

At length a nobler suitor came,
 For whom I gladly changed my name:
 His little bride I knew he'd blame
 If she forgot her Rosary.

Now oft beneath the shady tree,
 As children clamber up his knee,
 He often says, "Come in, till we
 Recite our daily Rosary."

Then, let life's fortunes ebb or flow,
 Come joy or sadness, weal or woe,
 Poor sinner, to this refuge go,
 And fervent say thy Rosary.

And when Death's voice at last is come,
 To summon exiles to their home,
 May we, beyond yon starry dome,
 Find God thro' Mary's Rosary!

LENORE.

[From the German of Gottfried August Bürger.]

LENORA sighed, one early morn,
 From troublous dreams awaking:—
 "Oh! Wilhelm, wilt thou ne'er return,
 Thy love so long forsaking?"
 With Frederick's army to the war
 Had Wilhelm gone to Prague afar;
 And never sent, that distance,
 A token of existence.

The king, and eke his royal queen,
 A love for war disclaiming,
 Forget at length their hateful spleen,
 A welcome peace proclaiming :
 And home the host, with trump and drum,
 And flute, and fife, and bugle come,
 Green leaves their brows adorning
 That merry sunbright morning.

Then far and wide, in swelling tide,
 Through high and by-way spreading,
 Flocked young and old, to view the pride
 Of heroes homeward treading.
 "Now, God be blest!" cried wife and child,
 "Oh, welcome!" shouted brides half-wild ;
 But, ah ! no soldier wore a
 Sweet smile for lorn Lenora.

Then low and high, with speech and eye,
 She questioned of her lover ;
 But not a trace of Wilhelm's face,
 Or fate, could she discover.
 And when at length the march was o'er,
 Her raven hair she wildly tore,
 And on the earth, with passion,
 She sat in maniac fashion.

Her mother cried, with gesture wild,
 And heart with grief o'erladen :—
 "Oh, God ! have pity on my child !"
 And clasped the frantic maiden.
 "Oh, mother—mother, all is o'er ;
 Now life for me hath charms no more ;
 Oh ! speak not of God's pity—
 Alas ! what kindness did He ?"

"Have mercy, God !" the mother cried,
 "Strike not, but pity, rather.
 What Thou hast willed hath best betide—
 My child, say one Our Father."
 "Oh ! mother, mother, idle dreams !
 God hates thy child too well, it seems ;
 Sure prayer avails one never
 When hope is past for ever !"

“ From God alone, if we repent,
 A Father's love we borrow,
 My child, receive the Sacrament,
 'Twill soothe thy pain and sorrow! ”
 “ Oh! mother, mother, speak not so,
 No sacrament can soothe my woe!
 What sacrament can waken
 The dead whom God hath taken ?”

“ Thy lover, child, hath sure trepanned
 Thy heart with love o'erladen,
 And traitorously ta'en the hand
 Of some Hungarian maiden.
 Then teach thy bosom to forget—
 He'll reap the curse of treason yet,
 When soul and body sunder
 His vows will wake Heav'n's thunder!”

“ Oh! mother, mother, woeful day!
 He's gone, and I'm forlorn,
 Come, death, and snatch my soul away—
 Oh, would I ne'er were born!
 Out, out, my lamp of life and light!
 Out, out, in gloom and endless night!
 Oh, speak not of God's pity!
 Alas! what kindness did he?”

“ Oh, God! Thy vengeful scourge withhold
 From her who raves before Thee,
 She knows not what she says, then hold
 Her guiltless, I implore Thee!
 Ah, child, forget those griefs of clay!
 Think, think on God, and yet one day
 To thy soul will be given
 Th' eternal Spouse of Heaven!”

“ Oh, mother! what is heaven's bliss?
 And what to lose salvation?
 With Wilhelm is eternal peace!
 Without him is—damnation!
 Out, out, my lamp of life and light!
 Out, out, in gloom and endless night!
 Since Wilhelm's gone and vanished
 All joys from earth are banished!”

Thus rolled the tide of dark despair
 Through lost Lenora's bosom,
 Thus did she rage 'gainst God, and there
 Blasphemingly accuse Him!
 Her breast she beat, her hands she wrung,
 Till night o'er earth her mantle flung,
 Till in the heaven's far height
 Shone out the silver starlight.

And then, without was heard the stamp
 Of horse hoofs, sudden ceasing;
 And then a horseman's martial tramp
 In dreadful sound increasing.
 The door is reached—the tinkling bell
 Sounds through the darkness like a spell—
 Then through the hall there fluttered
 A voice, as 'twere one uttered—

“Up, up, fond child—my lost Lenore!
 Art waking, love, or sleeping?
 Would'st thou on Wilhelm gaze once more?
 Art laughing, love, or weeping?”
 “Ah, Wilhelm, thou, so late at night!
 Alas! I've watched and wept outright,
 Sad were my wails and bitter,
 But say, why rid'st thou hither?”

“I took to horse at early night
 And rode from far Bohemia.
 Come let us speed our true-love flight,
 Quick, quick, sweetheart, why dream you?”
 “Ah! Wilhelm, now that danger's past,
 And coldly sweeps the midnight blast,
 Why hurry thus and haste thee?
 Let thy Lenore embrace thee!”

“Psha! let the blasts of heaven bestride
 The valley and the highland,
 Back to Bohemian plains we ride,
 This is no longer my land.
 Come! quickly dress, and spring behind:
 We needs must travel as the wind
 A hundred miles away, love,
 And thou'lt be mine to-day, love.”

“A hundred miles, and wed to-day ;”
 Replies Lenora, doubtful.
 “Thou sure must err, my gallant gay,
 Eleven has rung out full.”
 “Behold, the moon shines bright,” cries he,
 “We and the dead ride speedily.
 Ere midnight’s hour I vouch, love,
 Thou’lt reach thy bridal couch, love.”

“Tell me, where is thy chamber small ?
 Where may our bridal bed be ?”
 “Far, far from here, lone, cool and all
 Tranquil as where the dead be !”
 “Hast room for me ?” “For thee and me,
 Come don thy garb right speedily,
 The wedding guests are waiting,
 The chamber doors are grating.”

Quick did she dress, and quickly bound
 Upon the charger gallant,
 Her lily hands she flung around
 Her lover, leal and valiant ;
 And, sweeping wild as winter’s blast,
 Away, away, far, far and fast,
 They ride with wings of lightning,
 The road with hoof-sparks bright’ning.

Before her eyes the landscape flies,
 The scene shifts quickly round her ;
 Meadows and green can scarce be seen,
 Hollow the bridges thunder.
 “Dost tremble, love ? the moon shines bright :
 Hurrah ! the dead can ride aright—
 Dost fear the dead, Lenora ?”
 “Oh ! speak not, I implore you !”

But, hark ! what means that doleful wail ?
 Why croaks the bodeful raven ?
 The death-bell tolls—the death-song rolls :—
 “Let’s put the dead the grave in !”
 And then a spectre-band draws near,
 And bear a coffin on a bier,
 Lamenting through the hedges,
 Like croaking frogs in sedges ;—

“ With sigh and groan, at dead of night,
 Inter the corse all pallid ;
 Now cometh home my bonnie bride
 Unto her bridal pallet—
 Come, Chaunter, swell the wedding-hymn ;
 Be Hymen’s joy thy tuneful theme ;
 Come, Priest, and speak the blessing,
 My sweet bride needs caressing !”

The dirge is o’er—now halts the bier,
 Obedient to the speaker—
 Now distant noises reach the ear,
 Quick comes a horse, and quicker,
 And now is heard the tramp, tramp, tramp,
 As heavily the steel doth stamp ;
 Rider and steed, like lightning,
 The road with hoof-sparks bright’ning.

Now right and left, and left and right,
 Fly mountains, lakes, and valleys,
 Past whirl in most confused flight
 Streets, lanes, and squares and allies ;
 “ Dost tremble, love ? the moon shines bright,
 Hurrah, the dead can ride aright—
 Dost fear the dead, Lenora ?”
 “ Oh ! speak not, I implore you !”

Now, lo ! upon a scaffold high
 With supple feet and plastic,
 Half visible in moonshine fly
 A band of elves fantastic,
 “ Ha ! merry elves, come hither, pray,
 Know you not ’tis our bridal day ?
 With your fantastic treading
 You’ll grace our gladsome wedding.”

Behind the pair the elfins rush,
 As char or fancy brought them,
 Whirring as wind whirrs through the bush
 When leaves are sere in autumn,
 While sweeping wildly to the blast ;
 Away, away, fly far and fast,
 Rider and steed, like lightning,
 The road with hoof-sparks bright’ning.

The moon doth like a ghost appear,
 Through seas of azure driven,
 While higher up the stars career
 Across the arch of heaven.

"Dost tremble, love? the moon shines bright—
 Hurrah! the dead can ride aright:
 Dost fear the dead, Lenora?"
 "Oh! speak not, I implore you!"

"Hark, hark! methinks the cock doth crow—
 The sands of night are wasted;
 Soon will the breath of morning blow—
 We spirits dare not taste it!
 Alight! 'tis o'er! our weary ride—
 The bridal-chamber opens wide.
 Ha! ha! the dead ride fast, love,
 We've reached the end at last, love."

Before the iron gate now stands
 The steed, with bridle hanging;
 A gentle touch from viewless hands
 Opes wide the portals clanging;
 Asunder quick the portals fly,
 Now o'er dark graves the travellers hie,
 While ghastly in the moonshine
 The stones o'er many a tomb shine.

Hark! trembling, hark! a wonder dread,
 To start each slumbering feeling!
 The rider's garb falls shred by shred,
 A spectral form revealing!
 His head, a hairless, skinless skull,
 Grim, ghastly, gaunt, and horrible,
 An hour-glass and a sickle
 Equip the goblin fickle.

High pranced and snorted wild the steed,
 While blue flames shimmered o'er him;
 Then lo! the ground yawned wide beneath,
 And from the vision bore him.
 A howling cry, a serpent's hiss
 From moonlit sky and dark abyss!
 Lenora raved with horror,
 For death, grim death, cried for her.

Then danced beneath the pale cold moon
 The elfin-band till morning,
 All singing, to a sad quaint tune,
 Those solemn words of warning :—
 “ Be patient, though thy heart should break ;
 Bear all for the Great Chastener’s sake.
 Peace to your clay, Lenora—
 May God be mild before you ! ”

FLAX.

Written in 1864, when Flax culture was revived in the South of Ireland, and a large Factory erected in Cork under the auspices of the late Mr. Maguire.

SOUND a pæan to the flax,
 Seeds of flax !
 What a harvest doth it promise of fine linen to our backs !
 Let us scatter, scatter, scatter,
 From Rathlin to Cape Clear,
 If we’d richer be and fatter,
 Come, the flax-seed let us scatter
 In the spring-time of the year :
 Sow in time, time, time,
 In the merry vernal prime,
 Come drain the swelling sacks and exhaust the heavy packs
 Of the flax, flax, flax, flax,
 Flax, flax, flax !
 Then hurrah for the scattering of the flax !

See the beauty of the flax !
 Growing flax !
 In the smiling days of summer-time how pretty doth it wax !
 In the corners and the nooks,
 By the bogs and by the brooks ;
 Greenest of the green,
 Gently it is seen
 Waving to and fro :

How it smiles
 And beguiles
 The leisure-time of labour,
 As you saunter with your neighbour
 Down the furzy old boreen,
 While the setting sun is seen
 Pursuing golden tracks just behind the mountains' backs.
 Oh! there's not a crop we grow
 Fit to sow,
 Pull, or mow,
 But the merry smiling flax,
 Yes, the flax, flax, flax, flax,
 Flax, flax, flax!
 Then hurrah! boys, hurrah! for the flax!

Hear the music of the flax,
 Mills of flax!
 Where the clangour of machinery, of peace and plenty
 smacks.
 Hear the merry voices ringing
 Of the men and boys and women;
 See the merry eager clutching
 And the dexterous unsheaving;
 Hear the melody of scutching,
 And the spinning and the weaving
 Of the flax!
 Hear the sounding of the pounding
 And the scientific whacks,
 As the O's and Mac's,
 The Jennies and the Jacks,
 Never dreaming to relax,
 Work the flax!
 Oh! merry sight to see, in those halls of industry,
 The son of Erin's isle,
 With the jocund genial smile
 And the merry repartee,
 Oblivious of the tax
 Which their pocket never lacks,
 Working ever at the flax
 With the energy of blacks,
 Singing flax, flax, flax, flax,
 Flax, flax, flax!
 Then hurrah! boys, hurrah! for the flax!

Oh ! the future of the flax,
 Glorious flax !
 When old Erin from her ashes, 'spite of smashes and draw-
 backs,
 Like the phoenix shall arise
 After seven hundred years,
 From her melancholy eyes
 Brushing off the silent tears,
 And in holiday apparel,
 Robed in linen of her own—
 A *Te Deum* she shall carol
 In the place of ullagone !
 When that happy time befalls,
 Should some minstrel take the lyre,
 From the walls
 Of Tara's ancient halls,
 And the fire
 Of his poesy inspire
 His merry roundelay,
 Let us pray,
 As his memory recalls
 All the great ones of the past,
 Who have lived and died for Erin, struggling onward to
 the last,
 One name, at least, may not
 By the minstrel be forgot ;
 But as his visions glow
 In the light of heaven's fire,
 May his noblest anthem flow
 To the memory of — MAGUIRE !
 For we were, indeed, at zero, 'til he rose the hero of the
 flax, flax, flax, flax,
 Flax, flax, flax,
 Until he arose the hero of the flax !

 Come scatter, then, the flax,
 Saviour Flax !
 Annnuller of evictions, of the crow-bar and the axe !
 In the bog and in the mireland—
 Though the length and breadth of Ireland;
 Let us scatter, scatter, scatter,
 On the lower land and higher land,
 The seedlings of the flax.

Sow in time, time, time,
 In the merry vernal prime;
 Come drain the swelling sacks, and exhaust the heavy
 packs, of the flax, flax, flax, flax,
 Flax, flax, flax,
 Then hurrah for the scattering of the flax!

FLAXMAN.

LOAM LODGE, 8th Feb., 1864

CONSOLATIONS OF AN EXILED INVALID ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1870.

HOW many a way man is doomed upon earth
 To spend "Merry Christmas" as men love to call it!
 For some 'tis a season of frolic and mirth,
 For others, there's plenty of sorrow to gall it.
 Here family circles unbroken unite,
 There vacant chairs vainly await the departed;
 Here children's loud laughter enlivens the night, [hearted;
 There pines the lone father, death-doomed, broken-
 For me, I have tried, when this Christmas comes round,
 To smile in saloons or to revel in attics,—
 The last was the jolliest yet, though it found
 Me sick in a Boston hotel with rheumatics.

There, stretched at full length, as I lay on my back,
 I gazed on the ceiling all white that shone o'er me,
 A canvass so fair did my fancy but lack
 To paint all its visions of Christmas before me.
 One pleasure, at least, was the absence of sound,—
 Shut out was the world, with its cares and its troubles,
 Calm, holy, and sweet was the silence around,
 Unheard were the breakers of life, and its bubbles.
 The frosty wind sighed by my cold window-pane,
 But I was wrapped snug from those biting pneumatics,
 I tell you, my friends, I'd spend Christmas again
 Thus sick in a Boston hotel with rheumatics.

No doubt, it is lonely thus lying in bed,
With patience, however, to bear it I'm able;
Far better my lot than of those whom the dead
Come haunting at Christmas, and grin round the table.
Far better be captive in bed, when the pain
Is not unendurable, than in a prison
Where pleasure expires at the clank of the chain,
And hopes are extinguished as soon as arisen;
Far better an ocean of bed than of wave,
Secure from the dangers of wild aerostatics,
I envy no seaman so close to his grave,
While sick in a Boston hotel with rheumatics.

How many a Prussian now trembling in France
With hunger and cold and unspeakable hard fare,
Would envy my bed, where no bayonet or lance
Would conjure up all the wild horrors of warfare.
Oh! Christmas, what thousands of palls hast thou flung
O'er hearts and o'er homes through this war's desolation?
Thy advent, once welcome to aged and young,
Now brings only ruin and woe and starvation.
To count all the sorrows of Teuton and Frank
This Christmas, surpasses all my mathematics,
But one thing is plain, my good angel I think,
That I'm sick in a Boston hotel with rheumatics.

I think of the thousands like me who recline
In bed, but, alas! with less hope of revival,
Who, friendless, unpitied, incurable pine,
And think their best blessing Death's early arrival.
Ah! Christmas, what balm for those wretches hast thou?
The memories thou bringest but heighten their anguish,
The joys that thou sheddest of yore are but now
Dim phantoms before which they hopelessly languish,—
For me, I but suffer some pain in my knees,
Which yields to the soothings of homœopathics,
And calmly philosophize here at my ease,
Laid up in a Boston hotel with rheumatics.

And were I at home! what is home to me now,
Since those who endeared it are vanished for ever?
The father who sat at the board with the brow
Of Jove when serenest, again shall sit never.

The mother whose face, like a garden of flowers,
Gave out all its sweets to the sunshine of pleasure,
Sheds radiance no more on the festival hours,
A sharp, sudden stroke reft my life of that treasure.
A sister and friend guard the homestead for me,
While Destiny flings me amongst the erratics ;
Small difference then doth it make if I be
Once sick in a Boston hotel with rheumatics.

Come, let us be jolly, whatever betide,
And fill up a bumper : let's call it Falernian.
It matters not what be the liquor supplied,
As long as we cannot procure the Hibernian.
Come, Mary and Pat, to your welfare here goes ;
Time flies ! see, already the day's disappearing !
The season comes round once a year, and who knows
The next we may spend in the dear land of Erin ?
The thought is so pleasant, it makes me inclined
To try an experiment in acrobatics ;
This Christmas, at least, is the last that will find
Me sick in a Boston hotel with rheumatics.

FACETIÆ.

A BOWL OF BISHOP.

IT is no use striving to *cope* with a bishop, for he is sure to carry everything by *mitre-right*. He is the most imperious of men, because he *gives orders* the moment he finds any one fit to receive them. Bishops, in old times, were given to *powderring*, now they are content to make *canons*; though he may decry the use of wine, we are credibly informed that he has many *reserved cases* of his own. A bishop, though having *very bad sight*, may have a *very good see*; though he could not become a bishop without "*Nolo*," yet he holds *no low* position in the Church; dwelling in a *palace*, and oftentimes sitting on a throne, he frequently gives away a *crown*, and yet, at other times, could not raise a *sovereign*. Though averse to prize-fighting, he makes his living by the *Ring*. However he may denounce the vocation of Calcraft, no man is a better hand at *suspension* than he. Like the cholera, he makes a periodical *visitation*, but while the cholera *weakens* all the firm, he *confirms* not only all the *weak*, but all the year round. He may not *translate* a foreign language, but he may himself be *translated* to foreign parts. He may not lend you money, but he'll tell you when and how it is *Lent*. Not over indulgent to himself, he grants *indulgence*, nay even *license* to others, especially to those who wish to lead a *fast* life. He may not have *toast* for breakfast, but he often gets a surfeit of *toasting* after dinner. He is ever hospitable, particularly to young clergymen; indeed he no sooner gives a priest an *entree* into his diocese,

than he helps him to a *remove*. He may be a *handsome* man, but he must be *ordinary*. Sometimes, though quiet and subdued in his disposition, he is often to the end of his life an *Arch*-bishop. Performing *rites* for others, he is content with *dues* for himself. The bishop is *the head* of his own chapter, which reminds us that he is the *tail* of this.

DEATH OF A DISTINGUISHED GRINDER.

THIS morning I lost by death one of my very oldest and most cherished friends. I made his acquaintance some thirty golden years ago, and from that moment to the hour of his demise we lived and loved together. I cannot boast of having properly appreciated or requited his friendship, for the manifestation of that tender feeling was altogether one-sided—he lived and laboured for me, while I did very little to promote his comfort or convenience. I could only admire and commend his devotion on every occasion that offered ; in truth it may be said he was ever in my mouth. But he did not stand in need of me, being perfectly independent in his own resources, possessing a considerable interest in his native soil, and having, moreover, a large and profitable connexion with the gum trade. He is a person of a very modest and retiring disposition, living in a quiet row, where he was known only to his immediate neighbours. The natural sweetness of his disposition was never for a moment marred, though creatures of extreme acidity of temperament frequently passed his way. When I was preparing for college he was invaluable to me as a grinder, for he was exceedingly well up in that profession, and imparted his services with right good will, as if he had a personal interest in the matter. And yet, with all his natural talents, that modesty of character to which I have alluded would never permit him to be drawn out, even in moments of his greatest excitement, which were not rare, as he was very nervous by nature. I am indebted to him for many wise saws, but his pet one was, “My boy, I would fain keep a guard upon your tongue.” Towards his latter end

he contributed largely by his energy and zeal to promote the interests of a local corporation, which grew and expanded beneath his fostering care, and which now with unfeigned sorrow deplores his loss. He had a *penchant* for neatness, and even to the last morning of his life brushed up with all the air of a gallant. A short time before his departure he was to all appearance in his usual good health, having breakfasted heartily on spiced beef and the etceteras. Resting after the meal in his easy chair, he suddenly dropped off and expired. A coroner's inquest was held, and the verdict had well nigh been "*accidental death*," until it was ascertained that the deceased had been for some time suffering from a decay of the constitution, which, acting on a nervous temperament, caused him to indulge during his latter days in loose habits of living. He leaves no issue, having disappeared root and branch. It may be said in truth that he leaves a void which cannot be easily filled up. His neighbours regret his demise exceedingly, for he was to them a constant prop and support, and they look forward with considerable apprehension to their own not remote decease, which will no doubt be greatly accelerated by his lamentable removal. He was interred with all the honours, and sleeps in the hopes of a glorious resurrection, his occupation being gone, and never to be resumed, even in a future world; for who on earth could imagine what would be the functions in heaven of such a thing as—A JAW-TOOTH!

THE END.

BUCKLEY, M.B.

Sermons, lectures, etc.

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